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# PHILOSOPHY

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## EDITORIAL

This July 1956 issue of PHILOSOPHY is the last number I shall have the honour of editing. It was in January 1926 that the first number appeared, so that I have been Editor of The Royal Institute of Philosophy's journal for over thirty years. I recall that in launching the journal those many years ago, I explained that it was necessary to secure a large number of the Members of the Institute which had just formed a few months earlier lived either in the provinces or abroad, and it was, therefore, essential to have a publication which would keep them in close touch with its activities. I sincerely hope I have succeeded in some measure in fulfilling this object. It has been a guiding principle in the general policy of the journal to aim at making philosophy as intelligible as possible to the well-informed reader. With this object in view, the Editor has done his best to provide certain articles in every issue capable of being understood and appreciated by every educated person. But it has also been a feature of the journal to include articles of special interest to the expert.

I find that in the first number of PHILOSOPHY the late Professor Alexander wrote on "Art and Science," the late Professor G. Davies Hicks on "The Metaphysical Systems of F. H. Bradley and James Ward," the late Professor J. Arthur Thomson on "Different Kinds of Evolution," Professor Morris Ginsberg on "Emotion and Instinct," the late Professor John S. Mackenzie on "The Present Outlook in Social Philosophy," and the late Professor F. B. Jevons on "The Purpose of Philosophy." The same number also contained extracts of a course of lectures by Bertrand Russell on "Perception." Subsequent numbers were similarly honoured by many distinguished contributors who were living and active over a quarter of a century ago.

I desire to record my grateful thanks for the generous services

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given by the many authors of articles, reviewers of books and writers of surveys over the long period I have been Editor of PHILOSOPHY. I am sure the Members of the Institute and other readers of the journal will wish to join with me in expressing gratitude and appreciation for all they have done to enable PHILOSOPHY to achieve in some measure the original aim set for it.

The Council has appointed Harry Burrows Acton, Professor of Philosophy at Bedford College, University of London, to be my successor as Editor of the Institute's journal. Professor Acton, as a member of the Mind Association and of The Aristotelian Society, will be well known to many teachers of philosophy in the various Universities of the Commonwealth and America, as well as to Members of the Institute who have attended his lectures from time to time, and read his occasional contributions in PHILOSOPHY; and perhaps also his book published last year entitled *The Illusion of the Epoch*. I am sure Professor Acton will receive the same generous treatment from all those concerned in the dissemination of a knowledge of philosophy, that it has been my privilege to enjoy for so many years.

When the Institute was founded in 1925, it was considered by at least some distinguished thinkers that philosophy was both *critical* and *constructive*. I do not know to what extent the present generation of British philosophers would allow that philosophy should be constructive as well as critical. Perhaps I may, therefore, be permitted in conclusion to quote a short passage from Whitehead's *Process and Reality* on this topic.

"Philosophy will not regain its proper status until the gradual elaboration of categorical schemes, definitely stated at each stage of progress, is recognized as its proper objective. There may be rival schemes, inconsistent among themselves, each with its own merits and its own failures. It will then be the purpose of research to conciliate the differences. Metaphysical categories are not dogmatic statements of the obvious, they are tentative formulations of the ultimate generalities."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Process and Reality*, pp. 10-11.

SYDNEY E. HOOPER.

## PHILOSOPHY AND THE LIFE OF THE NATION<sup>1</sup>

The Rt. Hon. VISCOUNT SAMUEL, G.C.B., G.B.E., D.C.L., LL.D., D.Litt.

### I.

THE over-all picture of the first half of this twentieth century shows that science has grown, religion has waned, and crude philosophies have brought great disasters upon mankind. The age is perplexed and anxious—unsure as to the very foundations of its civilization.

In this predicament where are we to look for help? To natural science, which has won so many triumphs? But science knows its own limitations: it teaches us to understand what things are, and how to handle them: it cannot tell us for what purposes, or how in general to conduct our lives. Religion ought to guide us. But the great institutional religions are ancient; they have developed formal theologies and complicated dogmas; they are all, in greater or less degree, in disagreement with one another and at variance with modern science: so that, to many, the religions seem to have little relation to the realities of present-day life. They no longer govern the daily thoughts and actions of the generality of mankind.

Philosophy remains: and there if anywhere, now if ever, we might look for our guide. But will anyone say that, taking the world over, philosophy is in fact playing that part, is influencing, whether directly or indirectly, the thinking of ordinary men and women and the course of events?

Meantime we have seen what we have seen. The same generation that has witnessed, in scientific discovery, the mind of man rising to its highest achievements, has been plunged, by two great wars, into the lowest depths of barbarism. It is true that, in the working of our social systems, the western world has made in this century a striking advance; but that advance has not extended over the larger part of the globe; and everywhere, shaken by constant class conflicts, social structures are dangerously unstable.

In order to explain the background to this lecture—and as it may be my valediction—I would venture to begin with a personal note. My long life has covered a considerable part of this period of rapid change, most of it near the main current of events. I was born in the middle of the reign of Queen Victoria, and the first half of my adult life was spent in politics and administration. In

<sup>1</sup> Lecture delivered to the Members of The Royal Institute of Philosophy and guests at The Institute of Education, University of London, on 7th February, 1956.

philosophy I was interested only in so far as it included ethics, and in ethics mainly as the foundation for politics. In Parliament, in 1902, and soon after in the Government, I was in the midst of the violent political controversies of the years that preceded the first world war; and in the crisis of 1914 when peace and war were in the balance, and afterwards during most of the war itself. It was a testing-time for beliefs and principles, but it gave no room for the quiet pursuit of philosophical studies.

The war over, I was invited, unexpectedly, to be the High Commissioner for Palestine under the newly established British Mandate. I accepted that post gladly, as a great privilege, because I believed, as I still believe, that the present age offers the possibility of a re-birth of that religious impulse which twice in the Holy Land—first, three thousand years ago, and again two thousand years ago—had given to mankind the most powerful spiritual leadership it has ever known.

For five years I was in Palestine—1920 to 1925—helping to lay the foundations of a modern state in what had been a derelict province of the decadent Turkish Empire. Government House was situated, temporarily, in a building on the Mount of Olives itself. From my garden I could see the Dome of the Rock on Mount Zion; covering—however uncertain may be some of the Palestinian sites—the bare rock which undoubtedly was the altar of the Temple, planned by David and built by Solomon—the first Temple of the monotheistic religion in the world. Close by rose the dome of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Around the whole assemblage of domes and towers still stands the circuit of the walls that had borne the brunt of so many sieges; had seen the rise and fall of so many masters; and now—perhaps the strangest event in all that history—had come, at least for the moment, under the rule of the people of a small island in the far-off Atlantic.

But this was not the Jerusalem that had been foretold—the City set upon a hill, to be a beacon of light to all the peoples. Far from that, I found it a focus of incessant dispute and frequent conflict—between nation and nation, race and race, faith and faith, sect and sect. Worst of all, these antagonisms were held—and by everyone—to be natural and inevitable. Always it had been so and it would be so always. A hundred years hence, or a thousand years, there would still be Christians, Jews and Moslems, Catholics, Orthodox and Protestants, all in conflict with the others and each claiming divine authority.

First the moral shock of the Great War—that such an event in the history of mankind should have been possible in our time; and now this experience, this scene of religious strife and turmoil in the one place held holy by all the western nations, while the world

was crying out for moral leadership—these changed the course of my life. I felt compelled to stand back, to examine afresh the ideas that were causing this state of things, and to review my own.

## 2.

During the next ten years I tried to make good some of my deficiencies in philosophy, to keep up to date with the developments in science, and also to make some inquiry into present religious trends, both eastern and western. I was not specially concerned with the successive systems propounded by the great philosophers, ancient or modern, since each in turn had been refuted by the criticisms of the next. And it was not my business to specialize in logic, linguistics, semantics, or that kind of metaphysics that Michelet defined as “the art of bewildering oneself methodically.” I kept to my single track, guided by one very simple principle. It is this. Men’s actions are governed by their ideas: right ideas lead to good actions, and good actions bring welfare: wrong ideas lead to bad actions, and bad actions bring suffering and disaster. If we wish to discover the causes of our calamities, we must first clear our minds as to what is to be included as welfare; and then determine what ideas are right and what are wrong, guided in this by experience of past results and by the possibilities of present conditions.

In spite of frequent distractions from the political side, I have now been pursuing my single track for thirty years, “following the argument whithersoever it may lead.” This resulted in a book, first published in 1937, called *Belief and Action: an Everyday Philosophy*; followed in 1951, by a short book, *Essay in Physics*, in the province where empirical philosophy overlaps with theoretical physics. Another will soon be ready for the press: its subject is expressed in its title—*In Search of Reality*.

It was really Einstein who, though he was unaware of it, had been the origin of this last. I had been honoured by his friendship for many years. He had been interested in my *Essay in Physics*, and wrote me a long letter, stating his views on the relation between relativity physics and realist philosophy; this he allowed me to print as an addition to my essay: and he was good enough also to suggest my coming to see him in Princeton, if opportunity offered, so that what appeared to be a fundamental divergence of view might be discussed better than by correspondence. This proved to be possible in the following year. It was a long conversation, devoted to that single point. But the divergence persisted.

The general view I had reached as to what should be the main purpose of philosophy in the present situation, has been so well

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expressed by Professor K. R. Popper—the author of that excellent book *The Open Society and its Enemies*—that I venture to quote, with his permission, some passages from a recent paper by him. "Ever since the rise of Hegelianism," he says, "there has existed a dangerous gulf between science and philosophy . . . Genuine philosophical problems are always rooted in urgent problems outside philosophy, and they die if these roots decay . . . What matters is neither methods nor techniques—nothing but a sensitiveness to problems, and a consuming passion for them; or as the Greeks said, the gift of wonder." His contention is "that philosophy is deeply rooted in non-philosophical problems; . . . and that these roots are easily forgotten by philosophers who 'study' philosophy, instead of being forced into philosophy by the pressure of non-philosophical problems."

What is this but Socrates in the market-place over again, but with him now Francis Bacon, fresh from the House of Commons and the Law Courts?

Whitehead said much the same when, speaking of education in philosophy, he wrote: "The pupils have got to be made to feel that they are studying something, and are not merely executing intellectual minuets."

### 3.

Let me digress now for a moment to offer a parable.

I imagined the other day an undergraduate, taking the Oxford Greats School, having a dream on the night before his Finals began. He dreamt that, entering the hall at the appointed hour, he found it, to his surprise, filled by all the Philosophy Professors of the University and Tutors of the Colleges: he himself was expected to mount the dais and conduct the examination. Grasping at once the situation, this he did, and thus addressed them: "You will observe that there is no printed examination paper on your desks; and only a single sheet of foolscap, instead of a copy-book, to write on. That is because there is only one short question at this examination, which I will now dictate and ask you to write down. It is as follows—'What is it that philosophy really wants to say?'" Thereupon he left the platform. Time passed in a flash. He was sitting next at the table. On it lay a heap of foolscap sheets: all of them closely written, on both sides, with much interlining, many erasures, and insertions of second and third thoughts, with postscripts all round the edges. He announced: "These papers are all illegible and incomprehensible, and are all rejected. You will return in the afternoon, when you will be expected to answer the same question, but on one side of the paper only. And I would warn you that anyone who fails a second time will at once be dismissed from

the post he now holds." On that he woke up, with a happy sense of inward satisfaction.

Now I know that in treating so irreverently the professional philosophers I am obviously setting a trap for myself; for one of them might fairly ask—"Well, what would you yourself have written on one side of that sheet of foolscap?" I have only an amateur status, and no post to be dismissed from—except that of President of this Institute: and, after twenty-five years, it is high time that that was done in any case. So I will try to anticipate that challenge—not indeed on a sheet of paper, but by occupying half an hour of your time. And if what follows seems over-condensed, and, being deprived of most of the arguments, facts, illustrations and authorities that might be given in support, may appear to be dogmatic, self-assertive, and unconvincing, let me plead in defence that it is not easy to give the gist of thirty years in thirty minutes.

## 4.

The position that Einstein took up, in its essentials, was this. We have no knowledge of the universe except through our own mental concepts. What we take to be physical reality is merely a construction of our own. Mathematics consists also of concepts of the human mind. The only way from the one to the other—from mental concepts to reality—is (and I quote his words) "a way of conscious or unconscious intellectual construction, which proceeds completely free and arbitrarily." Einstein does not propose to raise mathematics to the same status of reality as the physical universe of our experience: but the effect of what he says would be to reduce our universe to a status of unreality like that of mathematics. In the conversation at Princeton Einstein said—and repeated with emphasis—"We may *hope* that an objective universe exists; we may even *believe* that it exists; but we do not *know* it." I differed, and he asked me to give my reasons. Briefly they are these.

For hundreds of millions of years, before man existed, an objective universe, of some sort, existed. Successive generations of astronomers, geologists and anthropologists have found proof of this: no scientist would dispute it. Existence comes first: human perception, if it comes at all, comes after: what is prior cannot be a construct of what is later. Nor is it the case that we have to depend only on our own sense-data for knowledge that an objective universe exists. Animal experience proves it also; plant experience as well. The birds I see in my garden, busy with their own affairs in their own section of our common world, and the trees and the grass give evidence that is as valid as my own. The individual existence of any of these confirms the real existence of a universe that is

objective to all. Lifeless nature also confirms it. We cannot doubt that the firmament of stars, this sun, this globe, the phenomena of light and heat, are facts in themselves, are in no way constructs of our own minds. The conclusion must be that an objective universe exists; independent of man; real in its own right. We were born into that universe; we live in it, die in it, our fathers before us, our children after us. We are not to be persuaded that we do not know whether it exists or not.

I said just now "a universe of some sort." When we ask "of what sort?"—that is a different matter, which ought to be dealt with separately. Then indeed we pass from the objective to the subjective. Then we come to consider, not things as they are in themselves, but our own perceptions and interpretations of them. Critics of realism point to the many past errors in man's interpretation of what he sees and feels—the earth flat, and fixed, with the firmament circling round it; eclipses of the sun portents from the gods; matter consisting of hard, small, indivisible atoms; a hundred other examples could be given. How, then, can we feel any confidence in whatever ideas about reality may happen to be current among conscious beings on this particular planet at this particular time?

The realist will agree as to the facts: he will admit that they forbid full confidence in any single scientific theory now accepted. But it does not follow that, because many beliefs have proved to be false, none are valid, and that the word "real" has no meaning. The vast structure of scientific fact, taken as a whole, stands firm under the test of experience, and proves the contrary.

When we set out in a search for reality and the critic asks—How do you know that there is any such thing?—we can offer that answer. We must differentiate between the cosmos itself and man's perceptions and interpretations of it. The one is objective; the other is subjective. The one is given; to bring the other into accordance with it is the unending task of philosophy and science.

That, then, we take as our starting-point. We do not get far, however, before we are met by another objection. With many nineteenth-century philosophers realism was discredited because it was identified with materialism. But that does not follow. One can be against materialism and still be a realist. In fact a realistic view of the universe about us will oblige us to believe that life and mind are an integral part of it: and further, that they are something other than matter: that conscious human actions, and the events of history, are not to be explained in the terms of physics and chemistry.

I think it will be generally agreed that our greatest contemporary neurologist was Sir Charles Sherrington. He spent a long lifetime

in the experimental study of the brain and nervous system, and in expressing his conclusions in works of admirable comprehensiveness and lucidity. This question of a basic distinction between life and mind on the one hand and matter on the other comes to a point in the problem, now actively discussed, of the mind-body relation. On this Sherrington wrote: the search, in any scheme of physical energy, "for a scale of equivalence between energy and mental experience arrives at none . . . The two, for all I can do, remain refractorily apart. They seem to me disparate; not mutually convertible, untranslatable the one into the other . . . Strictly we have to regard the relation of mind to brain as still not merely unsolved, but still devoid of a basis for its very beginning." I had the advantage of Sherrington's acquaintance in his later years and used sometimes to visit him at Eastbourne, where he was living. The talk usually came round to this subject, and I would support the dualistic position. I well remember, during a walk once along the sea-front, when Sherrington stopped, laid his hand on my arm, and said, summing up the whole matter, "It is perhaps no more improbable that our being should consist of two fundamental elements than that it should rest on one only."

In the works of six of the more recent writers on this subject which I have consulted, I find that all of them agree that science has so far not been able to bring mental phenomena into the materialist framework.

As to life and its reality, let me give an illustration. Suppose you are walking in a park in the autumn and pick up a fallen chestnut; perhaps near by you see what may be another chestnut; it is much the same in shape, size and colour; you pick it up and find that it is a pebble. Now look at the two as they lie side by side in the palm of your hand. The pebble is what it is; and left for a hundred years it will so remain. But the chestnut is not only what it now is. Let the conditions be favourable, and it will gather materials and activity from the soil, from the rain and water-vapour in the air, from the light and heat of the sun. In time it will become a great spreading tree; and that tree may produce, year after year, hundreds of other chestnuts, every one of them with the same potentialities. This potentiality is as much a part of the chestnut as the molecules, atoms and particles of which it is composed. Look well at the two as they lie in your hand—the pebble and the chestnut: you will see all the difference that there is between a not-living universe and a live one.

As to the reality of mind—here is a little incident that happened not long ago. A group of British Members of Parliament went to Russia, and at a social gathering Mr. Gromyko, in the course of conversation, said to one of them, Mr. Christopher Mayhew, "But

what is your own philosophy? Is that glass I am holding real or not?" Here was a typical example of the confusion that persists between materialism and realism. Mr. Mayhew, who tells the story, does not give his reply. But he might well have said, "Certainly I am a realist, Certainly your glass is real. But let me ask in return—'Do you consider the present conversation between us as also a reality?' " If Mr. Gromyko were to say "No," then obviously it would have been absurd to continue discussing the matter, and they would have done better to turn the conversation—if there was a conversation—to something else—if there was anything else. But if he were to say—"Yes; I agree that a conversation such as this is a real event in a real universe"—then he would have disposed of his own materialism; for it cannot be doubted that any discussion, with arguments on one side and on the other, is not material; cannot be analysed or measured by the methods of physics and chemistry, or be described in their terms. So with the novelist shaping his story, the sculptor carving his statue, the musician composing his piece, or any of the higher activities of the human mind.

Life and mind, then, are real elements in a factual universe. We know that they are real because we see what they do. They are not the less real because we cannot say what they are. And if minds are real, then mental phenomena, processes, events, must likewise be real. In other words ideas in individual human minds are part of the world of reality. Surely that cannot be doubted. Are they not embodied in our ways of life, in the creeds of Churches, the programmes of parties, the policies of nations? Do they not determine personal conduct and the course of history?

But because we rank ourselves definitely with the opponents of materialism, it does not follow that we have gone over to the opposite camp, to the Platonic idealists. The ideas that we have been speaking of are localized in living persons, and may be given objective effect. They are not philosophic abstractions—Truth, Beauty, Goodness or the like: not imaginary "forms," following fictitious "patterns," laid up in a hypothetical "heaven." Nor are they of the order of dreams, illusions, myths, creations of the imagination, with no objective consequences.

Bearing in mind that distinction, we may perhaps leave behind this perennial controversy and pass on to matters of more direct concern to our present inquiry.

## 6.

As ancient as the controversy between Realism and Idealism is the conflict of Freewill and Determinism, and usually as inconclusive. But it is vital to resolve it if we are to have any ground for asserting

individual moral responsibility, if we are to have a rational basis for any system of ethics.

The discussion is often inconclusive because the problem itself has been presented on false assumptions. The very term "Freewill" is misleading. To say that our decisions and actions are "free" suggests that they are uncaused and unconditioned. This leads to much learned debate on the nature of Causation. It is asked: "A cause A is followed by an effect B: how does that come about: and how, in such a process, can novelty ever appear?" The reply may be simple. This A-B relation never in fact occurs. Never in the history of the universe has any event been the consequence of some single event; always of a combination of a number of events. When something happens and we try to find why, we usually mislead ourselves by looking only for the one abnormal and final event which completes the combination and brings about the result; taking for granted the many normal events that have combined to create the situation itself.

To give an example—let us say a man smells in the night an escape of gas: he takes a box of matches and goes to look for it; there is an explosion and he is killed. The coroner's inquest finds that his own action was *the cause* of the death; and that is sufficient for all practical purposes. But anyone could write down a long list of previous events which are not taken into account because they belong to the usual state of things, although if any one of them had been absent this accident could not have occurred. For instance—the existence of coal and of the mining industry; the use of an explosive gas to light our houses; the fact that this house was lighted by gas and not electricity; the leak itself, due to some defect or negligence; the man having a box of matches at hand and not an electric torch, and his not knowing better than to use them—had any one of these factors been missing the event would not have happened: the moment they all came together, the explosion took place. The causality lay in the combination. And so it is with every event, of every kind.

There is therefore no mysterious "Law of Causation" that makes things happen, and that needs to be described, defined and explained by philosophers. It is a question merely of succession: when the prior events are such that the combination of them will produce a certain result, then, that combination being effected, that result will ensue, and if not, not.

There is, however, one law—or principle, or fact, name it what you will—which is of the essence of the matter; it is usually termed the Law of the Uniformity of Nature. This asserts that, if a certain combination of causes has produced a particular effect on one occasion, then the same combination on any other occasion, if it

is precisely the same, will always produce the same result. Like causes produce like effects.<sup>1</sup> There is no ground for supposing that causation in this sense applies everywhere else, but not to human decisions and actions. Acts of will, then, are not uncaused. It also cannot be contended that the will is "free" in the sense of unconditioned. It is evident that heredity and environment, "nature and nurture," always come in. The body and mind of the person who wills depend upon his ancestry, upon the country he lives in, the education he has had, the social atmosphere he breathes. Take all that away, and he would not be what he is, and what he is determines what he does. We have learned also that heredity includes primitive animal instincts, deep-seated in the subconscious mind, but continually erupting into the conscious. How futile then—we are told—it is to think that any of our actions is really spontaneous, that this supposed freedom is anything more than a pathetic illusion.

This description of the conditions cannot be disputed—so far as it goes. But it is incomplete, and that incompleteness makes it invalid. Another factor is present, and not to be ignored, which changes the whole situation.

Consider the human infant. Beginning from a single fertilized cell, at birth it becomes a separate entity, but it is still passive and helpless. A year later, five years later, ten years, it has passed through stages of physical growth; its parents watch the child developing, as they say, "a mind of its own." In maturity the adult possesses an independent power to choose and will to act. This has not come at a particular moment as some miraculous gift: it comes gradually and late, but as easily and normally as seeing or hearing, walking or talking; it is as real as hands or feet.

The principle that every event results from a combination of

<sup>1</sup> A school of present-day physicists, however, has challenged this. On account of certain difficulties that have arisen in laboratory experiments relating to the structure and mechanics of the atom, they have preferred to abandon causation altogether and to accept Heisenberg's Principle of Uncertainty, with "Chance," or "Probability," as the basic factor in nature. It is, of course, impossible to go into this question here. I can only recall that the two greatest theoretical physicists of our time—Einstein and Max Planck—while not denying the uncertainty that attaches to those experiments, definitely rejected Heisenberg's deduction, while Rutherford never accepted it. It is interesting to note that another physicist of international fame, M. Louis de Broglie, has stated recently that, while for twenty-five years he had been faithful, in his books and lectures, to the indeterministic view of Heisenberg and Bohr, he now believes that the whole question must be re-examined. (*The Revolution in Physics*, pp.—221, 237. Pub. by Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1954). Most philosophers have never been persuaded by the mathematical physicists to abandon causality and the uniformity of nature in favour of uncertainty and probabilities.

prior events, holds good here also. The working of the physical universe, the activities of the surrounding society, the characteristics that have been inherited by the individual, including those in his own subconscious mind—all come in. But there has been added something new, different, unique—his own autonomous will. This takes a place as yet another cause, inside the vast complex of causation. What has happened is not an aggregation—so much heredity, so much environment, education, subconsciousness, spontaneity—added together like a sum in arithmetic. It is a combination, like a chemical compound, not a mixture. And the product is as different from its constituents as the water you drink from a glass is different from the hydrogen and oxygen that compose it. We are bound to recognize that here is another ingredient—universal, familiar, and real in its own right. Abandon, if you like the ambiguous term Freewill; speak instead of “the power of choice”—which is what is really meant—and you will see that this supposed insoluble problem need no longer trouble us. Into the centre of the scene steps the human person, with a conscious mind that perceives, remembers, imagines, and then reflects, chooses and acts. Living with others in a community, this power to choose and to act carries with it, in his own eyes and in theirs, a moral responsibility. An ethical philosophy centred on the person finds here a firm basis.

Our path, seeking reality, has now led us into the broad fields of ethics and of social welfare and personal conduct. It brings us to the Moral Law.

#### 7.

Morality did not originate at particular dates when the great religions were established and their codes formulated. Beginning far back in the family life of simian men, it developed in the Stone Ages into the habits and customs of the clan, the tribe, and later the nation. As the centuries went by, prophets, priests and sages shaped it into the moral law we have today.

Whatever makes for the welfare of the individual and of the community—and in the long run the two are identical—is morally right. The elements in welfare are many—physical, mental, spiritual, emotional. They include the practice of right living itself; so they include what we term the virtues—honesty, truthfulness, kindness, self-sacrifice, and the rest. These are essential to right living; they come to be valued and pursued as ends in themselves. All this makes up the content of ethics: it has evolved under the stress of age-long experience. It is evolving still.

So much for the content, but what of the “sanction of ethics?” Why should we do what is right, when it is easier, or pleasanter, or more advantageous to do what is wrong?

Again, it is not a question of *a sanction* but of many sanctions. They may be seen to be of two kinds. Some are internal, within the mind of the individual; some are external. The first arise from his own power of choice; his own principles and conscience; his own self-discipline; his own character. The others are brought to bear by the environment; by the influence of schools and Churches, of institutions of all kinds; by the laws of the State; by the pressure of public opinion.

We come here to the heart of the matter. We have set out to find the causes in order to prevent their recurrence. We find them—obvious enough—in the wrong-doing of persons and of communities, sometimes through error, sometimes through bad intent. The Moral Law is as real as the Common Law: and both are constantly being broken. The working of our institutions, from the State downwards, is faulty. Everyone, looking around, sees clearly these mistakes and follies, these vices and crimes. Everyone has suffered from the wars. And everyone knows that if all this were otherwise, if the moral law were better observed, the evils that have afflicted us would diminish, and perhaps slowly disappear. Why is this not happening; or if happening at all, only too slowly? Evidently because the sanctions of the moral law are not strong enough to be effective. Those sanctions—the self-discipline of the individual and the influence of the society—are largely a question of social climate, of the social atmosphere. This is basic to the rest of what I have to say.

The climate of a society depends upon the ideas that are prevalent at the time. Ideas are disseminated from one to another, mainly by speech and writing. Civilization has developed the arts of language and literature. Oratory and drama, poetry and prose, have grown up through the centuries. The modern world adds the techniques of the newspaper, broadcasting and the cinema. Ideas are communicated also by the visual arts—painting, sculpture, architecture, and by music. All these influence the intellect, and the emotions.

These powerful agencies, affecting here and now, day by day, the opinions and behaviour of tens of millions—how far is the atmosphere that they are creating wholesome, how far is it tainted? The novel and the press, the cinema and the theatre, how far are they raising the civilization of our age, how far are they debasing it? If the mental air is polluted, how can the mind remain clean?

Noxious tendencies have always existed, and they have been countered by other agencies, powerful through their wide appeal. Chief among them have always been the institutional religions. What is new in our present situation is the acknowledged weakening of the Churches. To most thoughtful observers this is a cause of

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great anxiety. If this main support of the moral law continues to decline, and perhaps in the end to disappear, the effect upon the present and the coming generations may be grave indeed.

We turn then to consider, as the conclusion to our inquiry, what are recognized to be the two main causes of this decline:—the doubts, intensified by the two great wars, as to the belief, upheld by the theologies, in a Divine Providence, transcending the cosmos yet immanent in the world, just and merciful, omnipotent and benevolent, “a friend behind phenomena.” And this has followed upon the contradiction between the new discoveries of science and many of the old dogmas of theology.

The first of these brings to a point what has always been one of the great philosophic problems. Besides the Problem of Reality—which is the question of the validity of human knowledge; and besides the Problem of Freewill, or power of choice, there is, always with us, what is termed the Problem of Evil.

## 8.

But once again we must demur to being offered as a starting-point an abstract generalization. The realist will not discuss a “Problem of Evil” because he must hold that there is no such thing. *Evils*—in the plural and with no capital *E*—are certain. But that there should exist, let loose upon the world, some vague maleficent Force, formless and mindless, to be symbolized in a goddess Kali of the Hindus, an Ahriman of the Zoroastrians, the Adversary of the Book of Job, the Devil of medieval Christianity, the Satan of Milton, or the Mephistopheles of Goethe—all this is emptiness—the fantasy of a nightmare. Neither the theologian nor the philosopher need spend time and energy in debating it. We can come at once to close quarters with the particular evils that afflict us, and the practical problems that they present.

It is necessary first to distinguish between two categories, raising different considerations. One consists of natural evils, outside the control of man: the other consists of the evils that we bring upon ourselves.

All we are and do, enjoy or suffer, depends at bottom on astronomical and geological conditions. The earth is a planet as well as a home. The stage of evolution that it has reached as a planet sometimes makes it unsafe as a home. Although normally the processes of nature are gradual and evolutionary, events occasionally occur that are sudden and catastrophic. An underlying rock-stratum slips a little, and up above we have a disastrous earthquake. A volcano erupts, Pompeii is destroyed. We have hurricanes and cyclones, droughts bringing famine, raging floods, strokes of lightning.

Apart from the natural evils there are those—and they are by far the larger part—that are the consequence of our own ignorance or misbehaviour, our own mistakes, vices, crimes. Here we link up with the conclusion that we reached on freewill, and personal responsibility. In so far as there is power of choice there is room for mistake. When we make mistakes we suffer for it; and when we suffer we speak of the existence of evil. The remedy lies in our own hands—to learn from experience not to make the mistakes again. So we are back in the field of practical affairs. The scene shifts from theology to ethics, politics, economics, technology; to the moral law, to personal responsibility.

When we speak, however, of "we" and "our," it is well to remember that it is not necessarily the sufferer himself who is at fault, either wholly or even partially. We have the advantages of living in a society, and we have also the disadvantages. Someone must have been at fault; but it may be someone else who has injured us, or some institution that has failed to act or has acted wrongly—a trade union, an employers' association, a Church, a Parliament, a State that attacks another or fails to resist a wanton attack upon itself.

But these institutions—what are they? Nothing else than the persons over again, multiplied, organized and co-operating. There could be no State if there were no citizens; no Church if no congregations and ministers; no newspaper press, cinema, radio, if no readers or audiences, causing the demand and determining the supply. Institutions are not entities, things in themselves, with a life of their own—the State of Hegel, the organism of Herbert Spencer, the culture of Spengler, the civilization of Toynbee. All these are only patterns, and there cannot be a pattern without some "stuff" that is being patterned. There can be no wave in the sea without the water, no sound-wave in the air without the atmosphere, no design in the wall-paper without the paper, no pattern in the dress without the cotton or the cloth. So with all social institutions. There is a stuff. It consists of human beings, and of nothing else. If the institution fails and evils ensue, the responsibility is theirs, for there is nowhere else that it can lie.

Let us not set a low value on the achievements of man in his age-long struggle against the evils that have encompassed him. The whole of science, the whole of civilization, speak to the contrary. And if it is true that they themselves have brought evils, and grave ones, that were unknown to primitive man, the balance of good, taking into account intelligence, knowledge, health, is heavily to his credit.

Even the category of natural evils is not clear-cut and unalterable. Civilized man may be able to advance even there. Vast

engineering works have changed the character of whole provinces, preventing drought and flood. If there are hurricanes at sea, we build ships large and powerful enough to outlive the storm. We can even grasp the lightning and make it harmless. And against those other natural evils, the bacteria and viruses that bring diseases—microscopic, yet more formidable than the earthquake or the volcano—there man has won the greatest of all his triumphs. Plague and pestilence, and many diseases that had always been the scourge of mankind, have been almost eliminated; there are high hopes that many among the rest may yet be conquered.

Other calamities remain, arising from the physical character of the planet, which are far beyond the possibility of control. As to these we can only say—in the concluding words of one of the great Greek tragedies—"Lament no more: these things are so." But over all the rest of the vast range of mundane life, the field is open, the prospect hopeful, the future bright.

## 9.

I do not know that an empirical philosophy can bring us, with our present state of knowledge, much further, in our search for reality, than the line we have now reached. But it does not follow that this is the end of the road. We see it, vaguely, through a haze, stretching forward into an immense unknown.

We have been dealing, by the light of reason, with the perceived universe. But that cannot be all that there is; and reason is not the only faculty of the mind that can be enlisted. The universe that we see does not explain itself, cannot have created itself. We are bound to infer that there must be something else—not a figment invented to fill an intellectual vacuum; but real, of the same order of reality as the known cosmos. And the mind has also instinct, intuition, curiosity, imagination, emotion. Less reliable than reason, they may serve nevertheless to supplement it. There they are; active in mankind, helping to form ideas and to decide actions. They join together in Religion.

Religion seeks to catch the voice of Wordsworth's "All this mighty sum of things forever speaking." But in what language does it speak? That is the difficulty. When, in the practical world, something new appears—electricity, flying, nuclear energy—a new vocabulary quickly comes into being to describe facts and processes; it is based on terms we already had to denote matters more or less analogous. But that cannot be when we move into a sphere that is outside our experience altogether. Theologians find words like creation, infinity, eternity, omnipotence, omnipresence. But these words convey no significant meaning. When, rejecting mate-

rialism, we accepted the reality of life and of mind, we were obliged to say that we see what they do, but we do not know what they are. Accepting the reality of the Divine, we can say no other.

Nevertheless the emotions and intuitions of religion must find a means of expression and therefore must have an object. Philosophic ideas and terms are of little avail. "Religion," says Meredith, "has a nourishing breast: philosophy is breastless."

In the age when civilization arose in the valleys of the Nile, the Tigris and the Euphrates, where great armies could march and great kings gather power, it was natural for men to imagine deities like kings, only more so—their sway wider, their power more absolute, but still accessible through gifts and petitions. "The gods became," it has been said, "sublimated kings." This conception still has a place in various religions. A kind of courtiers' flattery survives: "When good befalls a man he calls it Providence, when evil Fate." All such ideas are crude and inadequate; but it is difficult to see, if Deity is to be spoken of at all, how the ascription of human qualities can be avoided, for we have no other vocabulary.

We have spoken of the value of religion as the stand-by of ethics, and the present danger that the social atmosphere may be worsened by its decline. It seems essential to maintain the religious outlook, religious moods, among the generality of mankind. Two thousand five hundred millions of men, women and children!—they are not philosophers; they are surrounded by every kind of temptation; they know their own limitations and deficiencies; they need something beyond and greater than themselves to sustain them, to satisfy their emotions.

Those who have attended some solemn ceremony in a noble church like Westminster Abbey, with its traditions of a thousand years of history, cannot fail to have been deeply moved by the poetic liturgy, the sublime music, the aspiration to righteousness. Ancient dogma is not the point of chief importance. A feeling of spiritual union with all the past and all the future, a sense of cosmic consciousness—it is that which is important.

So we come at the end to the necessity for a harmony between philosophy, science and religion. No one of them can rest in contradiction with the others. Theologies gradually change, from within: creeds evolve; the orthodoxy of one period in never quite the same as that of another; at the present time changes are proceeding, in some degree, almost everywhere. The teaching of science also changes, even in fundamentals: the twentieth-century trend against nineteenth-century materialism is significant. The synthesis of philosophy, science and religion may be achieved.

So modern man stands upon his planet—peering, through the haze, into the future.

## WHAT DOES THE TERM "ETHICAL VALUE" REALLY DENOTE?

The Very Rev. the Rt. Hon. Professor R. CORKEY, M.A., D.Phil.

THE terms we use in putting forward arguments may be ambiguous. When this is the case, our reasoning, however strictly we adhere to formal syllogistic rules, is apt to be fallacious. Here is a familiar text-book example of such a faulty process of thought.

This cat has one tail more than no cat.

No cat has two tails.

Therefore this cat has three tails.

Owing to the frequency with which the terms we use in everyday speech can be employed in a variety of senses, logicians have always been compelled to give some account of the meaning of terms. They have always been aware of many of the problems of "Semantics," as the study of symbols is called today.

In recent years attention has been called to the fact that occasionally a particular word, by reason of its associations, may tend to create, in the minds of those who use it, wrong impressions about the nature of the object it denotes. An example will indicate how this can happen. Ordinarily, when the predicate of a sentence is an adjective, it denotes a quality of the object named by the subject-term of the sentence. Consequently when someone says to us, "Jones is popular," we tend to take it for granted that the word "popular" denotes a quality in the character of Jones. This, however, is incorrect. The fact really denoted by the word is the fact that those who know Jones think well of him. In assuming thoughtlessly that his popularity is a personal quality—a constituent in his make-up—we have been misled by a linguistic idiom. Jones's popularity has its locus, not in him, but in the minds of those who know him.

Now a number of philosophers have of late assumed, too hastily I think, that a careful determination of the precise character of the objects denoted by the words we use, would enable us to resolve all the philosophical problems that have perplexed thoughtful people throughout the ages of the past. In particular, it is claimed that the difficulties men have had in interpreting ethical and moral judgments would disappear, if we attended more carefully to the so-called "function"<sup>1</sup> of the words we use in such judgments. We may find, it

<sup>1</sup> The word "function" is appropriate when used to describe the distinctive purposes for which we employ different kinds of sentences. The "function" of an indicative sentence, e.g. is to make a statement about something. Imperative sentences, however, have a different function. They are not used to make statements about anything, but in order to get things done. When,

is said, that our intention, in expressing ethical and moral opinions, is not to denote objective qualities of, or facts about the things of which we speak, but to indicate subjective attitudes that we and other people have towards them. Just as unreflecting people have been misled, by the adjectival form of the word "popular," so, it is alleged, many philosophers in the past have, in a similar way, been tempted to suppose that when we say, "This situation is good," we mean to affirm the reality of some quality of "ethical goodness" in the state of affairs before our minds. But, it is now thought by many, that the function of the word "good," i.e. our real intention in using it, is not to *denote* an objective quality in the situation, but merely to express, or denote, our subjective approval of it, or perhaps the approval of people generally.

Now if this novel "semantic" interpretation of our everyday ethical and moral judgments is correct, we shall obviously be compelled to accommodate ourselves as best we can to a purely subjectivist theory of morality. The good in which we believe, and which we strive to realize for ourselves and others, consists, according to this theory, merely of the things of which we, as individuals or as groups, approve, and are ready to commend. It will be impossible for us any longer to entertain the age-long opinion that some kinds of experiences, such as happiness, are really good, and that, other things being equal, the greater good, so far as we have real knowledge of it, ought always to be chosen in preference to the less. On this subjectivist assumption there will be no means available to us for discovering whether our ethical opinions about particular *situations* have been really wise or foolish; or whether any of our moral convictions about *what ought to be done*, are truly rational or irrational.

In considering this question of the function of our ethical judgments (i.e. as to the objectivity of what is denoted by such words as "ethical value" and "moral worth") I shall, for the sake of clarity, restrict my attention for the moment to what I call "*ethical* value," i.e. the value we seem able to recognize in some objective human *situations* rather than in others. The question of the objective status of the *moral* worth in some forms of *conduct* is another and more complex problem.

Let us take, as a typical example of such an ethical value, the happiness manifest in a group of healthy, innocent, school-children, playing together in their leisure time in a game which they all

however, we speak of the "function" of a substantive or adjectival term in an indicative sentence, the word is not so apt as the logician's word "denotation."

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that, contrary to common usage, I restrict the use of this term to non-voluntary intrinsic values. *Moral* value, on the other hand, pertains only to good will and its acts.

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obviously enjoy. Now if for the moment we limit our attention to that determinate situation, *as thus presented*, and judge of the goodness or badness of that perceived state of affairs, we would, I think, agree that, in respect at least of the children's happiness, the state of affairs is as it "ought to be." We seem to be able to see, as if by sense perception, that their enjoyment is in itself good; that it possesses ethical value; and that this ethical value is objectively "there," to be seen by any normally minded person who may witness the event.

I am here assuming that we can, at will, restrict our attention to particular determinate human situations, such as that which I have described, and I am taking it for granted, as I have indicated, that it is often possible to recognize the ethical character of such an isolated fragment of our social environment, in so far at least as the physical and psychological facts there present are known to us. Otherwise, in my opinion, we could never form any reasonable ethical or moral judgment about anything. It ought to be noted, however, that it is not possible to form a reasonable opinion about *our duty* towards such a situation merely on the basis of the facts immediately presented to us. To discover our duty in regard to any state of affairs, we have to take into account not merely the details of the situation here and now, but also the characteristics of the results that may accrue from it, in so far as these can be reasonably forecast. A games-master, e.g., who was responsible for looking after the health of these children, and who was aware of the danger to some of them, of over-exertion, might well be able to recognize duties towards the group which would not be felt by a mere on-looker who saw only the immediately apparent facts. The recognizable *ethical value* of a specific, determinate situation, as such, is one thing; our *moral obligations* in regard to it are quite another. We can often have a degree of certainty about the first, which we cannot have about the second. We discover the first, if at all, by immediate perception. We come to a knowledge of the second, in large part, by forecasting what may emerge from the present.

The question I now wish to consider is, What precisely is denoted by the term "ethical value." What does it really affirm about the experience of pleasure? What is its function in the sentence, "Pleasure is an ethical value"? Five different answers have been given to this question. (1) It was assumed, e.g., by the earlier hedonistic utilitarians, that "pleasure" and "ethical value" are identical notions. They mean the same thing. (2) Others, following G. E. Moore, have held that this value "resides in" pleasure, but is not identical with it. It is a "non-natural" quality of it, as distinct from its merely factual qualities. (3) The term, according to certain ethical relativists, denotes not anything objective about pleasure itself, but merely the fact that the speaker, and others, "approve of" it as a factor in

experience. The "function" of the term is to express or denote our *subjective* approval of pleasure, rather than an *objective* quality of it. (4) A fourth interpretation given to the expression, e.g. by Sir David Ross, is based on the theory that, while pleasure in itself has, strictly speaking, no intrinsic value, nevertheless "the innocent pleasures of one man are for any other a worthy object of satisfaction";<sup>1</sup> and they possess a derived value on that account. In reality, therefore, on this theory, it is the sense of satisfaction one has in contemplating the pleasures of another that is denoted by the term.

(5) A fifth view is that the term, when so used, denotes neither an objective quality as such, nor a merely subjective attitude or decision, but a *recognizable fact about* pleasure (and, as I think, about certain other specific qualities of experience that do not concern us now) the fact, namely, that where conscious experience exists, there pleasure, as a quality of that experience "ought to be," other things being equal. In and by itself, pleasure is "good-making" in that sense. When it unmistakably emerges in a conscious experience hitherto devoid of it, the experience is directly recognized to have become in a fuller degree more as it ought to be, other things being equal. As a consequence, the quality of pleasure, if, when it emerges in a particular determinate state of affairs, supplants feelings of pain, then the situation is directly recognized to have been transformed in some degree from being ethically bad to being ethically good, other things being equal.

It will not be necessary, in considering these various interpretations of "ethical value," to discuss many of the problems that inevitably arise in making a general outline of moral philosophy.

1. If we assume, as I do, that happiness in the lives of others has intrinsic value, and may in some circumstances give rise to moral obligations, we need not examine here the claims of various other qualities of experience to be also included in the class of value-qualities. (2) Nor need we consider whether we have ever a right, or a duty, to seek our own pleasure; provided it be admitted that, occasionally at any rate, we have a duty to seek the pleasure of others. (3) Nor will it be necessary to enter into the merits of a quasi-deontological theory, such as that of Ross, provided we agree, as Ross does,<sup>2</sup> that sometimes it is the perception of intrinsically good ends that awakens in us a sense of moral obligation. (4) Nor, finally, will we be required to examine the difficult problems that arise when, in seeking to discover our duty, we have to "weigh"

<sup>1</sup> Ross: *Foundations of Ethics*, p. 279.

<sup>2</sup> E.g., op. cit., p. 67, "Yet even if Utilitarianism is not true, it is still the case that it is *one* of our main responsibilities to produce as much good as we can, so that the question whether pleasure is the only good remains a very important question."

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values against other values and against disvalues, when all of these are present in the state of affairs we think it our duty to bring about. Any detailed consideration of these questions would be irrelevant to the more fundamental "semantic" problem I have in mind. The question I wish to examine is, what precisely is denoted by the term "intrinsically good" when we predicate it of any particular situation?

1. Moral philosophers now universally reject the first interpretation suggested above—that pleasure and intrinsic value mean the same thing, that the terms are synonymous. There are two serious objections to this theory.

(a) When we say, pleasure is good, or has ethical value, we plainly mean to say more than that pleasure is pleasant. Our intention is to affirm something about pleasure over and above its pleasantness as a mere psychological entity. This theory is based on what has been called "the naturalistic fallacy," on account of its identifying ethical value with a merely natural phenomenon.

(b) But there is a second, and from my point of view, a more obvious objection to this first interpretation. Pleasure in my opinion, is not the only basic intrinsic ethical value. There are other kinds of experience, e.g. goodwill, that equally possess this intrinsic value. The value itself must therefore be something that belongs equally to each of them—something distinct from their different psychological characteristics—and on account of which we group them together as a class by themselves. It was these facts that prompted G. E. Moore and others to suggest the second interpretation of ethical value.

2. Since basic ethical value somehow belongs to certain kinds of experience, and yet is not merely a constitutive or "natural" quality of these experiences, it seems fitting to Moore to speak of it as a "non-natural" quality. It is a "supervenient" quality; something that such an experience possesses over and above its merely factual psychological characteristics.

This terminology, however, is not satisfactory for several reasons. (a) "Non-natural" is a purely negative term and gives us no adequate information about the matter. (b) If it is meant to imply merely that this kind of value is "supervenient," the term is too wide; for it could equally well be applied to aesthetic and logical values, which are also supervenient. What we want to know is the *distinctive* characteristic of *ethical* value. (c) There is a further and more important objection. Without some further explanation it is difficult to understand why the perception of a "non-natural" quality should ever evoke in us a sense of duty, when the perception of a natural quality never has by itself this potentiality. It was pointed out by H. A. Prichard, in an article in *Mind* (January, 1912), that the recognition of another's pleasure as something possible of achievement, would not give rise to a sense of duty, unless this recognition

were accompanied by a knowledge of the fact that pleasure in itself is something that "ought to be." To explain this sense of duty we need, he wrote, "the further thesis that what is good ought to be."

Prichard, however, did not draw from his analysis of the facts the most obvious conclusion (essential, as I think, to any satisfactory objectivist theory of morals) that we have the capacity to recognize the fact that some things "ought to be." On the contrary, misled, as I shall try to show, by a subtle error that "ought refers to action and to action alone," he repudiated the thesis as false. Meantime my analysis of such judgments is that, not only do we have this capacity to recognize ethical facts, but that the knowledge this faculty gives us (i.e. the knowledge that some things in themselves "ought to be"), is an indispensable factor in any satisfactory explanation of how we come to a knowledge of our duty. Of this I shall have more to say later.

Now if, in coming to a knowledge of our duty, we are guided by an intuitive perception of the fact that pleasure in itself (and, as I think, some other qualities of experience) "ought to be," then the assumption of a non-natural quality somehow inherent in it would seem to be superfluous. It looks like a fifth wheel to the coach.

It is necessary, however, to point out that, while this *terminology* is unsatisfactory, there is no substantial difference, in ultimate ethical theory, between the views of those who use this terminology and the views I shall try to establish. There seems to me to be an indubitable objective reference in our everyday ethical judgments, and I think that those who affirm the reality of a non-natural ethical quality intend to indicate by this term just their belief in this objective reference in ethical judgments. They wished to make clear that the values we observe in some situations and not in others, are really "there," and can be seen by anyone who will adequately scrutinize the situation in question. Unhappily the negative term they used lent itself too easily to ridicule, and its use temporarily defeated the very purpose it was intended to serve.

3. The difficulty of explaining the link between observed (and apparently objective) values on the one hand, and our sense of duty on the other hand, has tempted some modern philosophers to put forward a new version of a very ancient theory. Basing their case largely on arguments derived from linguistic usage, these writers state that the terms we use in ethical discourse do not denote anything objective at all, but denote merely our subjective acceptance of some things as good, and our rejection of other things as bad. Prompted by our likes and dislikes, we ourselves decide to adopt towards some objects a pro-attitude, and towards other things an anti-attitude. They further affirm that all "ought-sentences" expressing moral obligation are ultimately derived from these prior

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decisions of our own regarding ethical and moral values, and "can be only verified by reference to a standard or set of principles which we have by our own decision accepted and made our own."<sup>1</sup>

This doctrine is reminiscent of the theory of some of the existentialist philosophers, who hold that "What has value has value only because it is chosen."<sup>2</sup>

I regret that in the space here available it is impossible to do full justice to the various lines of subtle argument used in attempting to establish these conclusions. I am satisfied, however, in view of the following facts, that this theory gives a very incomplete and misleading account of what is involved in our ethical and moral judgments.

(i) Moral judgments are not based solely on decisions of our own or of others, but arise, in part, from directly recognizable *ethical* values. It is true that when I make a moral judgment, such as "I ought to relieve this man, so far as I can, of his unnecessary and useless pain," I have made at least two prior decisions about the observed state of affairs confronting me. (a) I have decided on the evidence of the attendant physical facts that it is within my power to give him some relief, and (b) I have also concluded, as a result of a rapid and wider survey of the whole state of affairs presented to me, that this is the best thing I can do at the moment. But neither of these judgments concern the most important factor in the situation making it evocative of a sense of duty.

In coming to these conclusions, and in particular in arriving at the second decision, I have implicitly taken it for granted that pain in itself is an evil thing, in the sense that it ought not to be; and in consequence, I have assumed that, other things being equal, I ought to endeavour to eliminate it from the situation presented. In view of this assumption it is obvious that the "ought-sentence" expressing what I take to be my duty, cannot be adequately verified without taking this assumption about the disvalue of pain into account. Therefore in attempting to verify this moral judgment of mine an essential question is, "Is this notion about pain in itself a notion based merely on a decision of my own, or is it real knowledge of an objective fact about it, which I (and all other rational beings) can directly apprehend?" I shall endeavour to show that the person who, when he adequately reflects upon the matter, does not know that pain, for its own sake, is an evil thing, is more than a little "eccentric." He is a public danger. We are therefore being told a good deal less than the whole truth when it is suggested that "ought"-sentences can be only verified by reference to "principles which we have by our own decision accepted and made our own."

<sup>1</sup> R. M. Hare: *The Language of Morals*, p. 196.

<sup>2</sup> Sartre: *Existentialism and Humanism*, p. 32.

(ii) This theory brings us no nearer a solution of the problem posed by Prichard in his 1912 article. A mere decision of my own about pain in itself, or my like or dislike of it, is no sufficient reason why I should do anything about it. When a writer concludes that, "the sort of principles a man adopts will, in the end, depend on his vision of the Good Life, his conception of the sort of world he desires (so far as it rests with him), to create,"<sup>1</sup> he is unwittingly, no doubt, attempting to derive a "moral ought" from a mere factual "is." A man's "vision of the Good Life" is here apparently identified with "the sort of world he desires to create."

On this assumption, his moral principles originate in his desires. But desires are mere psychological facts, and are in an ethical sense good or bad, according to whether the object desired is good or bad. A theory that identifies the ethical good with the mere objects of a man's desire does not explain morality. It explains it away.

(iii) The fact that "Value-terms have a special function in language, that of commanding,"<sup>2</sup> does not logically require us to think that that is their sole function. When I make a value judgment about a piece of logical reasoning, and affirm that the conclusion drawn is just what it ought to be, I am indeed commanding the argument, but I am also indicating that it is based on objective links of entailment that any other intelligent person can detect for himself. Similarly, there is no good reason for excluding an objective reference from ethical and moral "ought"—sentences. They both command and affirm, and the commendation is based on what is affirmed.

(iv) These writers, in their use of illustrations, often fail to appreciate the significance of the difference between the meaning of good in the sense of "good in itself," and good in the sense of "efficient for doing a particular thing."<sup>3</sup> "Whenever we commend" (as, e.g., when we say 'That is a good motor-car') "we have in mind something about the object commended which is the reason for our commendation."<sup>4</sup> This statement overlooks the fact that, when the object commended is an *intrinsic* value, it is commended solely for its own sake, and not for the sake of anything else. This is most obvious in the case of a *basic intrinsic ethical value* such as pleasure in itself, whose worth is ultimate and inherent in itself. When we ask, "Why is pleasure in itself good?" or, "Why ought I, other things being equal, to choose pleasure for others rather than pain?" I can think of no conceivable reason that could be given, that did not imply that pleasure in itself is good, in the sense that it ought to be, and that pain in itself is bad, and ought not to be. It is in keeping with this confusion of things

<sup>1</sup> P. H. Nowell-Smith: *Ethics*, p. 313.

<sup>2</sup> R. M. Hare: *The Language of Morals*, p. 91.

<sup>3</sup> A. C. Ewing: *The Definition of Good*, p. 113.

<sup>4</sup> R. M. Hare: Op. cit., p. 130.

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that differ, that the same writer paradoxically repudiates the distinction between intrinsic and instrumental goodness.<sup>1</sup>

4. A fourth interpretation of the phrase "ethical value" is that it denotes neither an objective quality nor an objective fact, but signifies the subjective fact that we feel a sense of "rightful" satisfaction in contemplating the pleasures of others. Sir David Ross, e.g., while he recognizes conscientious acts as being good in themselves, denies that this is true of pleasure. "One has," he says, "only to reflect for a little on one's attitude towards a brave act—and towards a sensuous pleasure, to see how very different the two attitudes are." On this ground he thinks that "the sense in which, from the point of view of any man, the innocent pleasures of another are good is that it is right for him to feel satisfaction in them."<sup>2</sup> Much as I owe to Ross, I cannot but think that he has stumbled in his argument here. I shall only make two brief observations on this theory.

(a) It is possible to explain the difference in the attitude we adopt towards conscientious acts, as compared with that which we feel towards the pleasure of another, without denying the intrinsic value of the latter. A conscientious act has in it a distinguishing characteristic of its own, namely, voluntary effort for a desired end believed by the agent to be intrinsically good. It is this voluntary effort for a good end that wins our admiration. But, as I shall try to show, the pleasure of another, when considered in and by itself, is also recognized to have its own intrinsic value.

(b) Ross's attempt to define the intrinsic ethical goodness of pleasure in terms of "right" satisfaction, puts the facts in the wrong order. The word "right" is applied primarily and chiefly to acts, and denotes the effectiveness of the act to bring about an intended end. When the intended end is in itself good, and is believed by the agent to be good, the act is said to be "morally right." The pleasures of others have intrinsic worth, not because our satisfaction in contemplating them is right. On the contrary, our satisfaction in contemplating them is right because of their own intrinsic value.

5. A fifth and I think a better account can be given of the meaning of ethical value. The denotation of such terms as "ethical good" and "intrinsic ethical value" is neither a non-natural quality nor mere subjective approval or acceptance, but is a *unique recognizable fact about* certain specific qualities of experience recognized in the state of affairs judged ethically good. When, e.g., we say that the situation presented by the group of happy children (described in an earlier page) is "ethically good," or "as it ought to be," our attention has been arrested by the evident happiness in their experience; and we immediately and *ineluctably recognize* that the whole situation is,

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., p. 139.

<sup>2</sup> Ross: *Foundations of Ethics*, p. 279.

in that respect, as it *ought to be*. Further, when we say that pleasure is an *intrinsic good*, we mean that, wherever conscious experience exists, this quality of experience ought to characterize the experience, *other things being equal*, i.e. it ought, in itself, or in its own right, to be.

The assertion that a specific quality of experience, such as pleasure, possesses intrinsic ethical value, is thus the statement of a unique sort of fact about it—an ethical fact—the fact that it has within itself *a unique right to be*, wherever there is conscious experience. It is by reason of our recognition of this ethical fact about certain specific qualities of experience that we approve of them, and call them good. Further, it is the reality of this fact that enables us to justify our moral conviction that, in certain circumstances, we ought to choose pleasure for others, rather than pain. No doubt people generally *desire* pleasure rather than pain, but no moral ought can be derived from mere desire. It can only be derived from a desire the object of which is recognizably good, or at least not evil.

The intrinsic value of pleasure is thus a unique, and directly recognizable objective relationship between it and conscious experience. Whether, in a particular human situation, it obtains or not, it is something which, other things being equal, ought to obtain, and which is recognized by us as such. There are plenty of universal relationships of other types, which we come to know by direct, or intuitive, perception. The convex and the concave aspects of a concave mirror is a case in point. The qualities of shape and size are always conjoined in fact, though we can, of course, mentally distinguish them. The primary notes in the musical scale seem to belong together. The conclusions that logically follow from valid premises cannot be repudiated at will. The relationship of logical entailment is absolute and universal. But none of these perceivable universal relationships is altogether analogous to the relationship denoted by the term "intrinsic ethical value." In one respect it is unique. In some circumstances our recognition of a quality possessing intrinsic ethical value can *in its own right*, i.e. by its mere presence, evoke in us a sense of categorical moral obligation. No other sort of quality or relationship can do that. It is as easy to think of a round square as it is to think that, other things being equal, one ought to strive to create pain for others, rather than pleasure. That fact is of fundamental significance for moral theory.

Several possible objections to this interpretation of ethical value demand consideration.

I. The most formidable criticism of this theory that I have met with is that suggested by H. A. Prichard, which may be summed up in two pregnant and closely related sentences.<sup>1</sup> First, "The word

<sup>1</sup> *Mind*, January, 1912.

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'ought,' " he wrote, "refers to actions and to actions alone." Some writers who, following Prichard, reject the theory I have commended, satisfy themselves by merely repeating this dogmatic assertion in different words.<sup>1</sup> The second of Prichard's incisive statements is that, "An 'ought,' if it is to be derived at all, can only be derived from another 'ought.'" Several recent writers, who recognize that every *moral* ought is, in a sense, self-imposed; and who repudiate the notion of any objective ethical ought, find in this statement of Prichard's support for a purely subjectivist doctrine of morals, very different from that which Prichard himself endorsed.<sup>2</sup> I shall confine my remarks to the second of these statements, as the plausibility of the first will depend on the degree of truth expressed in the second.

Both of these statements are only half-truths. The element of error in them arose from overlooking the fact that there are some phenomena that require for their explanation, not one ultimate principle or fact, but two. One cannot explain the motion of the earth in its orbit by calling attention solely to the centripetal force of gravitation. A centrifugal force is also involved. Or again, one cannot fully account for the validity of a syllogistic conclusion simply by saying that it is derived from the truth of the major premise. The minor premise is also required. Similarly, one cannot satisfactorily explain or justify a particular moral obligation by citing merely one of the conditions ultimately implied in its truth. You need two.

To illustrate this truth let us recall the instance of obvious ethical value presented in the scene of happy children at play, outlined above. Let us suppose that the school's games-master, after watching their play for a time, comes to the conclusion that, in the interests of the general well-being of some of them whose strength might be over-taxed by further exertion, he ought now to bring their game to a halt. He feels an obligation laid on him to terminate their enjoyment for the moment, in the interests of a greater good. He recognizes a duty. He sees clearly what he *ought to do*.

Now if he happened to be a reflective person, he might, if questioned about the wisdom of his intervention, satisfy himself by saying that one is always under an absolute moral obligation to choose the greater good rather than the lesser, when both are equally practicable. He might even insist that this principle is a moral axiom, discerned by intuition, and analogous in this respect to the axioms of geometry. And he might add, using the terminology of Prichard,

<sup>1</sup> de Burgh: *From Morality to Religion*, p. 141; A. C. Garnett: *The Moral Nature of Man*, p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> R. M. Hare: *The Language of Morals*, pp. 29-31; P. H. Nowell-Smith: *Ethics*, pp. 34-35.

that his knowledge of what he ought to do in his situation had been "derived" from that supreme moral axiom implied in every genuine duty.

Now obviously in the games-master's impromptu "derivation" of one "ought" from another "ought"—one duty from another duty—one "ought to do" from another "ought to do"—a circumstance of great importance has been overlooked. This circumstance was the well-being of some of the children, which might have been jeopardized by protracted exertion. Not only was there an awareness of this well-being, but there was in his mind a conviction that, from the point of view of what *ought to be*, this future well-being, that would be menaced by further play, was of far more importance than the present enjoyment of the group, good as that was in itself. There was thus clearly present, in this evocation of a sense of duty, a recognition of the worth, in some sense of the term, of the future well-being, of a section of the children, distinct from the sense of moral obligation evoked, and distinct also from any merit, or moral worth, that might attach to the master's compliance with his obligation.

The defect in the games-master's explanation of his moral obligation discloses the element of truth and the element of error in Prichard's dictum, "An *ought*, if it is to be derived at all, can only be derived from another *ought*." It is true that in the mind of anyone who has any sense of moral obligation there is always at work (often sub-consciously) an ineradicable conviction that the greater good ought always to be chosen, in preference to the lesser, other things being equal.<sup>1</sup> It is equally true that this conviction plays a part in shaping one's knowledge of particular duties; and this knowledge, therefore, cannot be adequately accounted for without making some reference to this supreme moral principle.

It is not true, however, that the knowledge of particular duties can be derived solely from this supreme principle, or completely explained in terms of it. Inevitably the recognition of a particular moral obligation implies the apprehension, or envisaging, of some *end*, thought by the agent to be capable of achievement by him, and believed by him to be good, in the sense that it *ought to be*.

In short, to explain any particular duty satisfactorily we have to recognize two ultimate concepts, distinct from each other, and both of them distinct from the notion of merely natural, factual phenomena. On the one hand, there is the sense of moral obligation, a sense which, when it demands the performance of a particular act,

<sup>1</sup> As already indicated, I do not consider it necessary for my purpose to take into account, in stating this principle, Ross's quasi-deontological theory, that some kinds of acts are morally obligatory on the ground of their own inherent "rightness." This qualification also applies to the problems of "fair distribution" of the greater good.

is an expression, in the circumstances then obtaining, of the supreme obligation to prefer the greater to the lesser good. It is to be noted that, from the point of view of the agent, this sense of obligation (though as objective in its reference as any other axiom) is subjective in its status, as compared with the end aimed at in his act.

The second concept, on the other hand, is that of a good, or well-being, which is objective in its status, and which gives a precise and definite "content" to the particular moral obligation. The trouble is that the word "ought" is used in ethical discourse to describe both of these concepts. There is an "ought to do" and there is also an "ought to be"; and it is impossible in ethical theory to dispense with either of these. Prichard's error arose from his attempt to eliminate the notion of "ought to be," as an ultimate, underived concept.

It would carry me far beyond the bounds of my present subject to attempt to indicate the distinctive characteristics of personal well-being, the worth of which justifies, in part, the choices imposed on us by our sense of moral obligation. By the blanket term "well-being," I mean chiefly personal well-being (although I think consideration ought at times to be given to the well-being of the lower creatures). Suffice it to say here that personal well-being would generally include an element of happiness, and often, in my opinion, several other qualities of experience as well. These value-elements in conscious experience, when purged of all constituents not essential to their value, are what I mean by *basic, intrinsic, ethical values*. The fact common to all of them, is simply that where human consciousness exists, they ought, in their own right, to be.

Two other remarks ought to be made on this theory of Prichard's as expressed in the two statements of his I have quoted. (a) The first of these statements, that "The word 'ought' refers to actions and to actions alone" is merely a tautology, if 'ought' means, "ought to do." If, however, ought means "ought to be" then the statement is patently inaccurate. (b) My second remark is that Prichard's error here is, in effect, identical with Kant's erroneous dictum that there is nothing good without qualification but the good will. Most Kantians would now agree that though Kant made an immense contribution to ethical theory in calling attention to the distinctive characteristics of good will, it is impossible to derive particular duties from this principle alone, however it be interpreted.

2. A second objection that at first sight would seem to lie against this doctrine is that it is based on a tautology. Owing to the fact that in our everyday speech the terms "good" and "ought" are applied indiscriminately to good acts (having *moral worth*) and good ends (possessing *ethical worth*), one would seem, by this theory, to define a good act as one that seeks what is good. The theory I have suggested, however, is that *moral* goodness (which pertains only to

good will) is the choice of *ethical* goodness which belongs to the objects sought by good will. It should be noted, however, that ethical goodness, being an ultimate concept, cannot be further defined, beyond stating that it denotes the fact that the objects so described ought, in themselves or in their own right, to be. I may also point out that the qualifying phrases "in themselves" and "in their own right" are negative in their significance. The phrases indicate that intrinsic ethical goodness, is not a "consequential" epithet.

3. Another objection that may be urged against this doctrine is that it is an attempt to derive an "ought" from an "is." This objection, however, is only a variant of the first which I examined above. It arises, like it, from an incomplete analysis of a situation that gives rise to a moral imperative. In such a situation there is, indeed, always a consciousness, however dim or intermittent, of a supreme imperative concerning what one ought to do. This ultimate moral principle, however, is abstract in its terminology, and would remain void of content, and would be completely inapplicable to experience, unless it were accompanied by a knowledge of the specific elements in our social environment which in themselves ought to be. Now this knowledge of elements of worth in some ends as compared with others, is, in a sense, knowledge of an objective fact; but it is a unique type of fact—an ethical fact—namely, that these elements ought in themselves to be, wherever there is human consciousness. Unless these value-elements can be recognized as such, we have no means at our disposal whereby genuine specific moral imperatives can be distinguished from the most pernicious commands. How do we know, e.g., that it is better, other things being equal, to commend the cultivation of happiness in home life, rather than to provoke misery and inflict pain. There is only one reasonable answer to this question. We are aware of the fact that happiness in itself ought to be, and therefore, other things being equal, ought to be sought in preference to pain, in accordance with the supreme moral imperative.

4. A fourth possible criticism is that, in view of the wide disparity of opinion amongst different peoples regarding what is good and what is evil, it seems temerarious to assert that human reason ineluctably recognizes any particular quality of experience as intrinsically good. There are three considerations that seem to me to take the edge off this criticism.

(a) We have to recognize that there are a few people who, though their mentality is in many respects perfectly normal, are nevertheless sub-normal in their capacity to recognize certain features of their environment. There are, e.g., a small minority of people who are colour blind, and there are a number who are note-deaf. It is not inconceivable that there may also be a rare individual here and

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there who is a-moral, in the sense that he cannot recognize ethical qualities as such. I recognize, of course, that this differentiation of the normal from the sub-normal requires some clarification; and I shall try to show that such clarification is no more difficult in the case of the ethically blind person than it is in the case of the person who is colour blind.

(b) It is necessary, in ethical theory, to bear in mind the difference between "intrinsic ethical value," and "*basic* intrinsic ethical value." A human situation may be, in Ross's terminology, "good on the whole," even though it is not "wholly good." Such a situation is intrinsically good, notwithstanding that there are in it both good and bad elements. A *basic* intrinsic value, however, is wholly good. It is good through and through.

When this distinction is taken into account, it becomes apparent that the differences of opinion about what is basically good and basically evil is not so vast or widespread as we are often inclined to think. It has often been pointed out<sup>1</sup> that people whose moral codes conflict do not necessarily disagree about what is ultimately or basically good.

(c) There are certain primary laws of thought which are ineluctably recognized as valid by all thoughtful people who have given attention to their nature. They are recognized as valid because, unless they are assumed to be true, it becomes impossible to think logically or coherently about anything. Similarly, there are some qualities of experience—pleasure in particular—without recognizing which, as basically good, one cannot think coherently about good and evil at all. There is, e.g., no sense in speaking of a particular situation as intrinsically "good on the whole," unless there is in it some distinctive feature, or features, that lend to it its distinctive worth.

In the light of this fact we can discern a principle of coherence applicable to ethical thinking, just as reasonable in its own domain as are the laws of thought in the domain of mathematical or physical theory. Coherence in ethical thinking, however, is not compatibility merely with the laws of thought, but compatibility with the unique fact that some qualities of experience have a "right to be" that is not possessed by others. Any acquaintance with the attempts that people make to bring consistency into their ethical thinking and moral practice, will show that the happiness of others was a consideration which they felt compelled to take into account in any such effort. The occasional sadist, if such there be, who would deny this, and who presumably envisages as his ideal for humanity a world of cold-blooded devils tormenting each other, may rightly be treated as *sub-normal*, so far as ethical perception is concerned. He

\* See Sorley: *Moral Values*, etc., p. 97; and A. C. Ewing: *Ethics*, pp. 126 ff.

is as myopic in this sphere of things as a colour-blind person would be in an exhibition of water-colour pictures.

There are several advantages in the account I have given of ethical value.

(1) This interpretation obviously is not guilty of any "naturalistic fallacy." The goodness affirmed of pleasure is, in current phraseology, a supervenient characteristic. It is, however, not consequential to anything else. Its worth is in itself, and is self-explanatory.

(2) It bye-passes the difficulty that Prichard found in utilitarianism, as it was understood in his day. When it is recognized that all moral beings are intuitively aware of a supreme moral obligation to choose, when recognized, the best practicable alternative in any situation calling for action, there is no logical difficulty in understanding how a mind, recognizing that obligation, and recognizing also that the happiness of others is something which in itself ought to be, will "sense" a categorical obligation to seek that happiness, when, so far as he can judge, it is the best alternative possible of achievement in the situation presented. There is no "link" missing between the objective value perceived and the inner sense of duty. One might as reasonably suggest that there is a link missing between the abstract "laws of thought" and the specific concrete objects to which they apply.

(3) Finally, there is a further advantage in this theory of ethical value, that is of more practical importance. It gives us good reason for thinking that we are not necessarily condemned to the dispiriting doctrine of an absolute ethical relativism. It may be that there is a real worth-while task awaiting us in this world, of the character of which we have some assured knowledge. And it may well be that by our efforts to fulfil this vocation we are furthering the completion of high ends greater than we can at present conceive.

# THE PHILOSOPHICAL RELEVANCE OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE<sup>1</sup>

FREDERICK C. COPLESTON, S.J., M.A.

I. The meaning of the title of this essay is not clear. And something must be done towards clarifying it, in order that the question at issue may be understood.

The term "religious experience" has a wide range of meaning. It might mean experience of God, in the sense that it is taken from the outset to signify experience of an existent Being whom it is proper to call God. Or it might mean experience which is claimed by the person who enjoys it to be experience of God, though we do not assume from the outset the validity of the claim. Or it might mean experience which is connected in such a way with the thought of God as to warrant its being called religious even though the claim is not made that it is experience of the divine reality itself. Further, some people might wish to say that there are experiences which possess certain qualities in virtue of which the experiences can or should be called religious even though they are not directly connected with the thought of God. Examples of religious experience in the last-mentioned sense might be a certain sense of sublimity enjoyed while contemplating a mountain-scene or of mystery while gazing into the depths of a forest.

Leaving the matter there for the moment, I turn to the term "philosophical relevance." When I ask whether religious experience possesses philosophical relevance, I intend to ask whether it increases our knowledge of reality. It might do this in at any rate two ways. It might increase our knowledge of the experiencer, the subject. And it might provide grounds for saying that there is a Being of such a nature that it is proper to call this Being "God." I propose to confine my attention to this second theme. In other words, the principal subject for discussion is whether religious experience affords adequate grounds for affirming the existence of God.

It is immediately evident that the term "religious experience," as used in this discussion, cannot be given from the outset the first of the possible meanings to which I have alluded above. For if we assume that there is experience of an existent divine Being, we assume the existence of God. I also exclude the last of the possible meanings which I mentioned.<sup>2</sup> In fact I propose to confine myself

<sup>1</sup> This paper represents a lecture given at The Royal Institute of Philosophy in March, 1956.

<sup>2</sup> This exclusion should not be taken as equivalent to a flat denial that feelings of sublimity and so on have any religious significance. Perhaps they have. But I do not intend to discuss the matter here.

to consideration of religious experience in the second of the meanings mentioned, namely to experience which is claimed by the person who enjoys it to be experience of God. And I wish to inquire whether we have adequate grounds, or can have adequate grounds, for thinking that this claim is sometimes true. I must emphasize, however, that I am talking about the external observer. I am not asking, for instance, whether it is psychologically possible for a person who enjoys certain types of experience to doubt the existence of God while the experience lasts. I am asking whether the external observer, if I may so describe him, has or can have adequate grounds for thinking that certain types of experience can best be explained by supposing that they are in fact what they are claimed to be, experience of God. And in speaking of adequate grounds I prescind, of course, from purely theological considerations and presuppositions.

What do I mean by the term "God"? I do not think that the term can reasonably be used to signify either the things which compose what we call the material world or finite human selves or both. For to affirm that the only existing realities are material things and human selves is, in ordinary usage, to affirm atheism. Hence at the very least I mean by God a Being which transcends material things and which is not identical with the human self. True, even though I do not wish to presuppose a specifically Christian concept of God, this description is very far from being all that is usually meant by the term. The first question to be asked, however, is whether religious experience affords empirical evidence of the existence of a Being other than the experiencer and the material world. For if a negative answer had to be given to this question, it would be senseless to discuss the Being's nature and attributes.

It is sometimes said that one cannot raise the question of God's existence "outside religion," and that "inside religion" there is no sense in raising it. The religious man, when left to himself, no more raises the question of God's existence than we raise the question of the existence of the air which we are breathing. "Outside religion," however, the word "God" has no meaning. The question of God's existence cannot, therefore, be raised. This is not a point of view with which I find myself in agreement. That certain experiences occur which are grouped under the heading of religious experience is an empirical fact. And there seems to me to be no cogent reason why the external observer should not raise the question whether or not the occurrence of such experiences affords at least probable evidence of the existence of a Being other than the experiencer, other finite selves and the material world.

2. In modern theological literature we hear a good deal about meeting or encounter with God and about the I-Thou relationship.

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The religious consciousness, it is said, is characterized by this relationship. That is to say, for the religious consciousness God is not an "It," an object about which a man thinks in the same way in which he may think about the moon or about electrons or about the relations between the subconscious and the conscious. The metaphysician, it is true, may think about God in this way or at least in an analogous manner. But metaphysical reflection about the *Ens a se* is not the same thing as the encounter with God which is characteristic of the religious consciousness.

My reason for mentioning this theme is sufficiently obvious. I announced my intention of understanding by the term "religious experience" for purposes of this discussion experience which is claimed by the person who enjoys it to be experience of God. And what is often called encounter or meeting with God clearly comes under this heading. We can ask, therefore, whether reflection on this experience discloses evidence that it is in fact what it is claimed to be. But first of all I wish to make the following point. When people speak of encounter with God as a characteristic of the religious consciousness, they are talking, I think, of a common phenomenon, of an experience, that is to say, which is commonly enjoyed by devout Christians, Jews and Moslems and which is not a relatively rare experience such as mysticism. Hence I leave mysticism out of account for the moment, though I shall return to the subject later. I cannot undertake to discuss the relation between "ordinary" religious experience and mysticism, because I do not think that I could do this without introducing theological considerations which I wish to avoid. But it is clear, I think, that those who speak of encounter or meeting with God are not talking in an exclusive sense about mysticism, even if they would include it.

Now, the experience of the I-Thou relationship or of personal encounter with God can perhaps be regarded, from the point of view of the experiencer, as an experimental verification of a pre-existing belief. Take the case of someone who believes already in a God with whom man can enter into communication. If he then has the experience which is called encountering or meeting God, in prayer let us say, this experience counts for him as an experimental verification of his belief. And his life of prayer helps to sustain his belief. This is, I think, a common enough case. And generally speaking those who have what I have called "ordinary" religious experience are those who already believe in God. True, the experience may be itself the origin of real belief. But in such a case a man generally has already an idea of God, gained probably through his education, in the light of which he interprets the experience.

The question arises, however, whether religious experience of this type affords any evidence in favour of God's existence for those

who do not already believe in God and who look at the experience from outside, so far as it is possible to do this. For this to be the case, it seems that there would have to be some feature of the experience which could not be adequately explained except by postulating God's existence or at least which could be more adequately explained by postulating God's existence than by not doing so. And there appears to be some considerable difficulty in showing that there is any such feature. For it might be maintained that, once given the initial belief on the part of the experiencer, the experience can be adequately explained in terms of this belief. The validity of the belief may be provable on other grounds, metaphysical grounds for example. But this is not the point at issue. The question is whether we can point to any feature or features of the experience under discussion, when viewed from the outside, in support of the validity of the belief. And the comment might be made that though devout worshippers of Isis probably enjoyed some experience of encountering Isis, this does not show that Isis exists. Given the belief, the experience can be explained in psychological terms. Similarly, it might be argued, the religious experience of a monotheist does not show that the God in whom he believes exists. For, given the belief, the psychologist can account for the experience without postulating a transcendent object of the experience.

The reply might be made that there is some confusion here. For the problem is not that of justifying some particular conception of Deity. True, Isis was popularly conceived as an anthropomorphic goddess, and as such she belongs to the realm of mythology. But it might be argued that the religious experience of the devout worshipper of Isis was fundamentally an encounter with the divine, not with a mythological figure. The properly religious element in the experience of the worshipper of Isis is not without affinity to the religious experience of the devout monotheist. Did not Apuleius in the *Metamorphoses* speak of the one Deity worshipped under many names? And cannot we find similar utterances in the Vedas, with reference to Indian polytheism?

This may well be true. But we ought to be careful not to presuppose the validity of monotheism on grounds other than those provided by religious experience. I mean, we ought to be careful, for purposes of this present discussion, not to interpret the religious experience of the worshipper of Isis in the light of a belief in monotheism, resting on other grounds than religious experience, and then to use this interpretation to show that the belief is substantiated by the experience so interpreted.

It might, indeed, be argued that in all religious experience there is a sense of the Transcendent, and that though the way in which the Transcendent is conceived generally depends on pre-existing

beliefs, the sense itself is most reasonably explained as awareness of existent divine Being. In this case, however, it seems that the cases most likely to convince the external observer that there is such an objective awareness will be those cases in which the subject of the experience is, *prima facie* at least, most acted upon and in which the encounter is most evidently the result of the activity of Being other than the experiencer. I turn, therefore, to the consideration of mysticism. To do so is, of course, to limit the scope of the discussion. But a man who does not already believe in God is not likely to be brought to this belief by a consideration of other people's religious experience unless it can be shown to him that the experience cannot be adequately explained if we not admit the activity of a Being transcending the self, other selves and the material environment. And as this activity would seem to be more evident, *prima facie* at least, in mystical experience than in ordinary religious experience, it is, I think, only natural to turn to a consideration of mysticism.

3. The first point to be made is that in speaking of mysticism I am not speaking of phenomena such as imaginative visions, voices, levitation or even of ecstasies and raptures when considered under their physical or corporeal aspects. We all know that people "see things" and hear voices without any even *prima facie* connection with intimate union with God, and that there can be pathological states resembling ecstasy which are susceptible of a purely naturalistic interpretation. Nor am I speaking of the not so uncommon stage of mystical experience in which (if I may beg the question for the moment) the action of God is practically imperceptible but which is characterized rather by the prolonged act of wanting God. I am speaking of states in which the subject is aware of being acted upon, of an intimate union and one-ing with a Being immeasurably greater than himself. I am talking, if you like, of what Plotinus calls "the flight of the alone to the Alone," of the "vision" in which beholder and beheld are as one.

But if mystical experience is understood primarily in the sense of a purely interior experience, it is obvious that the external observer is dependent on the testimony of mystics. Some mystical phenomena are in principle visible by anyone, ecstasy in its corporeal aspect for example. But no external observer can see the accompanying interior experience. The question arises, therefore, how far we can be expected to accept this testimony.

The first remark which I wish to make on this topic is that in a certain number of cases we have at our disposal the normal criteria for deciding whether a person intended to tell the truth or not. There certainly have been pseudo-mystical charlatans and people who wished to draw attention to themselves. But if, for instance,

we find St. Teresa describing her experiences in writing because she has been told to do so by those whom she regards as possessing authority over her, and if we find that in ordinary life she was a woman of good sense and who was recognized as being free from pride and vanity, it is at least more probable that in her writings she intended to tell the truth as she saw it than that she intended to write what she knew or suspected to be false.

To avoid any possible misunderstanding, I must emphasize that I am not suggesting that the life of a mystic proves the truth of what he or she says. But it seems to me to be obvious that we can legitimately use available information about the life and character of a mystic to help us to decide whether he or she was in good faith and intended to tell the truth. This seems to me to be a matter of common sense.

One special reason, however, why we cannot use the probable good faith of a mystic to prove the truth of all he says is this. What a mystic says or writes about his experience is written subsequently to the experience itself. And he is likely to interpret the experience in the light of beliefs which he already possesses. Let us suppose for the sake of argument that two men, the one a Christian and the other a Hindu, enjoy similar mystical experiences. The former is likely to interpret his experience in terms of Christian theism, while the latter, if he already accepts a monistic version of the philosophy of the Vedanta, is likely to interpret his experience in terms of this philosophy. And when we have reason to think that the subsequent interpretation of an experience is probably due to, or at least influenced by, beliefs which precede the experience, we obviously cannot be expected to accept the occurrence of the experience as conclusive proof of the truth of the interpretation. In other words, the mystic's experience, even if genuine, does not guarantee the mystic's interpretation of it. No theological or philosophical statements which he may make are exempt from critical discussion in the light of the appropriate norms for judging whether such statements are true or false.

Diversity of interpretation can often be explained in terms of different previously-held beliefs. But is there any fundamental agreement in the testimony of different mystics? If we try to allow for elements which are probably due to pre-existing beliefs, we find I think, common testimony (at least in what are claimed to be the higher reaches of mystical experience) of intimate union with a Being which is felt as immeasurably greater than the finite self and which is felt as being the ultimate reality or, in some sense, as the only true reality. Further, this union is experienced as something given, as an invasion or transformation or taking-up of the self. Hence some psychologists of the religious consciousness speak of the "givenss" of mystical experience as being at any rate one of its

special characteristics. It may be said perhaps that I am able to find this common testimony because I recognize as "mystics" only those who enjoy certain types of experience. But it is, I think, an empirical fact that we can find marked similarities in the descriptions of mystical experience which have been given by mystics belonging to different periods and to different cultural and religious traditions. And this remains a fact even if we exclude a certain number of writers who are sometimes spoken of as "mystical" writers.

The question then arises whether this element of givenness can be adequately explained without reference to a metaphysical cause of or factor in the experience. And some, of course, maintain that it can be. (J. H. Leuba is one of these.) They maintain that there is no factor discoverable in mystical experience which cannot be explained naturalistically through the operation of psychological and physiological causes. It may well be that it is the character of givenness which makes the mystic spontaneously attribute his experience to contact with a reality other than himself. But the character of givenness accompanies the emergence of mental processes from the subconscious into consciousness. To take a simple example, a pious person may be troubled by conflicts, ideas and temptations which seem to come from without, and he attributes them to diabolical agency or suggestion. But the psychoanalyst can reveal the origins of these mental events in the subconscious. The character of givenness, therefore, provides no proof that mystical experience is what the mystic thinks it to be. And some writers would even go so far as to say that mystical experience can be reproduced artificially, as by the use of certain drugs.

Others would not allow that any adequate purely naturalistic explanation of mystical experience has yet been given. There are, indeed, a number of mystical phenomena, in a wide sense of the term, which occur even when there is no real question of contact with God. And in such cases naturalistic interpretations can be given. Further, it is difficult to exclude naturalistic explanations of such phenomena even when they are associated with the mystical experience proper. But no conclusive naturalistic explanation of the latter has yet been provided. And as for the artificial reproduction of mystical states by the use of drugs, descriptions of the states attained by such means do not appear to correspond with the descriptions given by the chief mystical writers of what they consider to be their most important experience. In any case the effects on life and conduct of the experiences of a St. John of the Cross or of a St. Teresa do not appear to follow in the case of "mystical" states deliberately and artificially produced; and this seems to indicate a difference between the two sets of states. It has yet to be shown that anyone whose "mystical experience" consists in states pro-

duced by drugs is a suitable candidate for beatification or canonization.<sup>1</sup>

It is arguable, of course, that even if no adequate naturalistic explanation of mystical experience has yet been given, we are not entitled to exclude *a priori* the possibility of such an explanation being provided at some future date. But some writers<sup>2</sup> contend that even if a purely psychological account of mystical experience can or might be given, it by no means follows that the mystic's own account of the matter is false. Naturalistic explanations can be given, for instance, of the movements of the planets. But the Christian does not suppose that this fact excludes the divine activity in Nature or that God's activity is confined to miraculous "interventions." Similarly, it might be true both that a naturalistic psychological account of mystical experience could be given and also that this experience was what the mystic takes it to be. For the matter of that God might, as William James suggested in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*, act on the subconscious.

The general contention to which I have alluded in the last paragraph, namely that a psychological account of mystical experience does not necessarily exclude the possibility of the mystic's account being true, seems to me to be valid. But I doubt whether it helps very much in the present discussion. If a Christian believes that God's activity is manifested in the movements of the planets, he does so on other grounds than inspection of the planets' behaviour. If a theologian or a metaphysician believes that God "concurs" with every human act, including free acts, he does so on other grounds than empirical observation of these acts. Similarly, if an adequate naturalistic explanation of mystical experience could be given, the contention that the experience is at the same time the result of divine activity would have to be supported on other grounds than analysis of the experience as an empirical phenomenon. But it is with the experimental argument for God's existence that we are at present concerned. That is to say, we are asking whether mystical experience, so far as it can be known by the external observer, provides any evidence in favour of the conclusion that there exists a Being whom it is proper to call "God." It will not do, therefore, to presuppose the existence of God on other grounds and then to say that mystical experience, even if it is susceptible of a purely psycho-

<sup>1</sup> It may be said that the religious mystics themselves have employed a technique, for example ascetic practices. But the Christian mystics at least adopted ascetic practices for other purposes than for inducing mystical experience. In any case they did not regard the relation of mystical experience to ascetic practices as being that of effect to cause in the same sense in which states induced by drugs are the effects of the latter.

<sup>2</sup> I am indebted for this idea to a reading of Professor R. H. Thouless's valuable little work, *An Introduction to the Psychology of Religion*.

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logical explanation, is nevertheless the result of divine activity. It might be; but from the point of view adopted for purposes of this discussion, the point of view of the agnostic, this consideration is not of much help.

There is, however, another consideration which seems to me to be relevant. The highest mystical states are admitted by the mystics themselves to be inexpressible. Mystical writers have, indeed, tried to suggest their nature by the use of analogy and imagery; but they recognize at the same time that nobody can really understand what the experience is unless he has enjoyed it himself. Now if we accept this view of the matter, and we can hardly avoid doing so, it appears to follow that no external observer can ever know that an adequate naturalistic explanation of mystical experience has been given. Nor can he legitimately state that it could in principle be given. For he does not really know what the experience is about which he is speaking. Similarly, he cannot recognize any of the abnormal states produced by the use of drugs as equivalent to the summits of mystical experience described in extremely obscure terms by St. John of the Cross. He can experiment with mescalin, for instance, if he wishes to; but he does not know and cannot know that the results are comparable to the supreme experience of the mystics.

Unfortunately, however, the very reason which militates against the claim that mystical experience is susceptible of a purely naturalistic explanation militates equally against the claim that mystical experience is philosophically relevant in the sense in which I have been using the term. For if the external observer cannot know what the mystical experience is, he is unlikely to be much impressed by an argument for God's existence which is based on such experience. One can doubtless exaggerate the ineffability of mystical experience. Mystical writers would hardly have attempted to suggest the nature of their experience by the use of analogy and imagery if they had thought that no idea at all, however inadequate, could be communicated. At the same time it appears that the external observer is not in a position to "recognize" the higher levels of mystical experience. In this case he can never know that any naturalistic explanation which is offered really is an explanation. Nor, on the other hand, can he feel confident that a supernatural explanation is required.

4. Readers of this paper will understand that I am not concerned with edification or with religious exhortation. But some may well feel dissatisfied with the inconclusive position which I seem to have reached. And this dissatisfaction may arise, not because of the absence of edifying sentiments, but because it is felt that something important has been omitted and that the scope of the discussion has been too restricted. As I share this dissatisfaction, I wish to broaden somewhat the scope of the discussion and to inquire whether we can

make a little more of the experimental or empirical argument for God's existence.

It is, I think, a fact that those who are impressed by religious experience, especially by mystical experience, as testimony for the existence of God do not have in mind simply the interior experience itself. So far as this experience can be known from outside, by description rather than by acquaintance, they see it in the context not only of the lives of the mystics but also of the general history of religion and, indeed, of human culture. They see, as it were, a pattern which suggests to them an irruption of supernatural life and varying degrees of contact with the source of this life, a source transcending the material world and the finite self. In other words, the pattern suggests to them the hypothesis of God's existence. And even if they would not pretend to be able to exclude *a priori* and conclusively the possibility of a psychological explanation of the empirical data, they would maintain that the hypothesis of God's existence is more reasonable and makes better sense of the data than any naturalistic explanation yet advanced.

This line of argument has, of course, its difficulties. Suppose that we point to the characters and actions of religious mystics such as St. Francis of Assisi and argue with Bergson that it is more probable that the lives of these men and women are the result of contact with a source of life other than themselves than they are not. It is, indeed, scarcely necessary to remark that if a man does not admire or value the qualities and activities of a person like St. Francis, any line of argument which presupposes the admirable and valuable character of these qualities and activities will to this extent fail to impress him. But even if we do admire the character and actions of a St. Francis, it is still difficult to prove that they were the result of mystical experience. After all, outstanding examples of self-sacrifice and of charity can be found in the lives of people whom we do not ordinarily regard as mystics.

Nevertheless, the line of argument to which I have alluded undoubtedly weighs with some minds. Indeed, it seems to some people much more impressive than any purely metaphysical argument. But is it simply a question of some people seeing a pattern which others do not see or of one man seeing one pattern while another man sees another pattern? If so, it might be objected that the man who sees the pattern of varying degrees of contact with God does so because he already believes in a God with whom human beings can have communication.

Perhaps this last remark, intended as an objection or criticism, suggests a way in which the approach to God's existence through reflection on religious experience in general and on mystical experience in particular can form part of a cumulative argument for God's

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existence. If a person has come to the conclusion on other grounds that it is in some degree probable that there is a God who could conceivably be the object of human experience, the occurrence of religious experience in general and of mystical experience in particular, especially when seen in the general context of human life, might serve for him as an empirical verification of the hypothesis at which he has already arrived. We would then have, it might be claimed, a general line of argument somewhat analogous to the process of hypothesis and verification in the sciences. In this case the conclusion would be more or less probable; but it would be capable of indefinitely progressive verification.

This is substantially the position of Bergson as presented in *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*. And it is a line of thought with which I find myself in sympathy. But there is, it seems to me, a serious objection against it. A scientist may form a hypothesis and then deduce that if certain requisite conditions were fulfilled and operations performed (I mean, if certain experimental work were carried out), certain events should occur if the hypothesis were true. And if the events do in fact occur when the experiment is performed, this tends to verify or confirm the hypothesis. But we are not in a position to make analogous experiments with regard to mystical experience. We cannot make experiments with other people. It may be said that I can perform experiments with myself. That is to say, I can fulfil certain conditions or perform certain actions and see what results in the way of religious experience. But to me at least it seems obvious that, apart from other considerations, one of the prerequisite conditions would be that I should commit myself to religious belief and to a truly religious attitude; and in this case I would no longer be the external observer of whom we have been speaking. Of course, religious experience might suddenly "happen" to me, as in the case of those sudden conversions to which William James devoted his attention; but such an event could hardly be called an experiment in the sense in which we speak of controlled experiment in science. If, therefore, we wish to maintain that religious experience in general and mystical experience in particular can play a verificatory role in regard to the hypothesis of God's existence, we cannot, I think, interpret verification here as strictly analogous to experimental verification in science.

But not all scientific verification takes the form of controlled experiment. An astronomer is not in a position to experiment with the heavenly bodies in the same way that a chemist can experiment with chemical substances. He may, however, be able to deduce from a hypothesis that if the hypothesis were true certain phenomena should be observable. And it might be argued that mystical experience can play a verificatory role analogous to that played by these

observable astronomical phenomena. It does not appear, indeed, that the analogy could be a strict one. For while it might be deduced from an astronomical hypothesis that certain phenomena must occur if the hypothesis is true, we can hardly argue that religious experience in general and mystical experience in particular must occur if there is a God who could be the object of human experience. However, we might pass over this objection and say that there is an analogy though not necessarily a strict one. If there is a God who could conceivably be the object of human experience, then it is tautologous to say that religious experience is possible. And if in fact it is found to occur, its occurrence serves as verification of the hypothesis.

Unfortunately the matter is not quite so simple as this. If we say that the occurrence of mystical experience verifies the hypothesis that there is a God who could be the object of human experience, we might mean either of two things. We might mean that analysis of instances of mystical experience shows them to be what they are claimed by the mystics to be, namely instances of contact with God. But as we saw in preceding sections, it is somewhat difficult for the external observer to assure himself that this is in fact the case. Or we might mean that from the hypothesis that there is a God who could be the object of human experience we can deduce that certain types of experience, considered in terms of a purely psychological description, could occur, and that instances of mystical experience are instances of these types of experience. In this case we would, indeed, have some analogy with the scientific process of hypothesis and verification. At the same time I cannot think of anyone who has argued explicitly in precisely this way; and at first hearing at least it sounds a very odd line of argument. Who, it might be asked, would ever think of deducing from the hypothesis that there exists a God who could be the object of human experience the conclusion that if such contact were to take place it would be accompanied by certain psychological experiences, and then of looking round to see whether in fact there are instances of such experiences occurring? Of course, the fact that a line of argument appears odd does not necessarily constitute a disproof of its validity. But if the argument which I have mentioned appears to us to be very odd and "artificial," it suggests at any rate that those who are impressed by religious experience in general and mystical experience in particular as testimony in favour of God's existence have not got this sort of argument in mind.

But is the argument really quite so remote as I have suggested from the way in which the minds of those who are impressed by mystical experience as evidence for God's existence actually work? If I may be permitted a crude over-simplification, we can say that

the mystic passes beyond all things which can be represented by the imagination and has the experience of entering what has been described as "darkness" or "night" or "the cloud of unknowing." Those comparatively few persons who pass beyond this stage have the experience,<sup>1</sup> in varying degrees, of union with a Being immeasurably greater than themselves, of being-taken-possession-of, of "transformation." Now, it is arguable that those who are impressed by mystical experience as evidence for the existence of God are impressed, in part at least, because they see in this succession of states "what they would expect" if there is a transcendent God who could be the object of human experience. In this case the line of thought at the back of their minds, even if they never formulate it explicitly to themselves, seems to resemble the line of argument which I first stigmatized as "odd." If there is a transcendent God who could be the object of human experience, one would expect that, for such experience to take place, man would have first to "pass beyond" the imaginable things to which his attention is first directed by nature. And this passing beyond would naturally involve "night" or "darkness." And any succeeding experience of union or contact would naturally be inexpressible save in terms of analogies and images taken from the world of "common experience."

What I have been saying may give the impression that I am preoccupied with assimilating arguments for God's existence to the scientific process of hypothesis and verification. But this impression would be based on a misunderstanding. In this paper I am treating exclusively of one particular argument, namely that from religious experience. This argument has been presented by some writers, notably by Bergson, in a form which is claimed to be analogous to the scientific process of hypothesis and verification. It is therefore relevant to inquire if in fact there is or can be any analogy and, if so, where it lies.

5. It may be said that in this discussion I have not arrived at any definite, positive results, and that the reason for this is that I have persisted in looking at the matter from the point of view of the external observer. True, in the last section I shifted to the point of view of the man who already believes on grounds other than religious experience that it is probable that there exists a God who could conceivably be the object of human experience. But I have represented this initial belief as analogous to a scientific hypothesis; and to this extent I have persisted in keeping to the point of view of the external observer. Yet those who are impressed by the argument

<sup>1</sup> I am using the word "experience" here to signify experience considered in its subjective aspect. I mean, by saying "experience of union with a Being" I do not intend to assume that the experience is necessarily what the subject feels it to be.

from religious experience in general and mystical experience in particular are not external observers if one means by this term those who are completely indifferent to religion. Even the "religious agnostic" (the man who has some "sense" of the Transcendent, of a reality other than the visible world, but who for various reasons is agnostic about any definite conceptual presentation of the Deity) is not an external observer. Why not simply admit that the argument from religious experience possesses force only in the minds of those who stand already "within religion"? It may very well be the case that, as I maintained in the first section, the question whether religious experience provides any evidence for the existence of God is a question which can be raised "outside religion." But the affirmative answer to the question impresses only those who stand to some degree "within religion." The hostile critic will say that their liability to be impressed is due to their proneness to snatch at anything which looks like an empirical verification of the belief which they wish to hold. But it is also arguable that they are impressed because they have already some knowledge by acquaintance of religious experience. Even the religious agnostic, in the sense alluded to, must be allowed to have some knowledge from within of religious experience, unless one wishes to circumscribe the meaning of religious experience in a very narrow way and to limit it to certain experiences in a place of worship or at a prie-dieu. And the reason why these people are prone to see in mystical experience an empirical confirmation of their belief is that they have a "sympathetic" insight into it and see in it, even if they cannot fully understand it, a prolongation and deepening of an experience of which they themselves already possess some awareness.

It seems to me to be true that those who are impressed by the argument from religious experience are generally those who already possess some belief in God or who at least wish to believe in God. And it is arguable that this "wish," when sincere, expresses what may reasonably be described as some degree of religious experience. But it might then be argued perhaps that these people see in mystical experience not so much evidence of the existence of a reality other than themselves and the material world as evidence of the nature of this reality.<sup>1</sup> And this is a matter with which I cannot deal in this

<sup>1</sup> The question of the relation between mystical experience and interpretation of the nature of God is an interesting question. In the case of those Sufi mystics, for example, who spoke of God in terms of "friend" and "lover" and who were conscious of their departure from the legalistic Mohammedan tradition, how far was the change in the conception of God due to their mystical experience and how far did it precede this experience, being shaped, for instance, by Christian influences? Such questions are difficult to answer. But if it could be shown that their conception of God was primarily due to their mystical experience, this would be a point of some importance.

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paper. It doubtless comes under the general heading of "the philosophical relevance of religious experience"; but I have deliberately confined my attention to consideration of one particular point.

A final remark. If in this paper I have dealt with the argument from religious experience in a rather critical way, I should not wish it to be thought that this was due to the fact that I am associated with a philosophical tradition in which no stress is laid on this particular line of argument. It is, indeed, a line of argument which appeals to me. But one has to examine what sort of an argument it is and what, if anything, is shown by it. I do not profess, however, to have done more than to suggest some lines of reflection which have occurred to me. I make no pretence whatever of having given a definitive treatment.

# COULD MACHINES BE MADE TO THINK?

F. H. GEORGE, M.A., Ph.D.

## I

THIS question as to whether machines can, or could, be made to think, has become familiar in recent years since the renewed outburst of interest that has taken place in the development of Cybernetics. The notion of servo-mechanisms and the like has a history in remote antiquity but the form of its fundamental question has recently taken on a new and especially acute significance.

Our analysis will be essentially twofold: it will attempt to analyse the question from a semantic point of view, and also from the point of view of scientists seeking to express general laws of behaviour. It will incidentally consider, as part of the first viewpoint, the criticism of Turing's theses<sup>1</sup> made by Dr. Mays.<sup>2</sup>

What are we asking when we ask whether or not machines could be made to think? We needs must be careful to make it absolutely clear what we mean by a "machine" and what we mean by "think." If for example we define "machine" in such a way as either to include the meaning of "organism" or to exclude it, or if we define "thinking" as something that organisms do, and machines do not do, then we make the whole question merely a matter of verbal definition in the most obvious sense; a matter of convention or stipulation, and this I shall suppose is not the intent behind the question. Thus we need criteria for machines and thought.

Let us notice straight away that if we took "machine" to mean a mechanical device such as a motor car or an aeroplane, then we would have no serious difficulty saying that machines do not in any plausible sense think. This notion of a machine is the one, one suspects, that many people have in mind when they ask themselves these sort of questions. These machines are not, in any sense, thinking machines nor were they ever designed as such. Now from our semantic point of view it is clear that the basic question that we set ourselves: "could machines think or not?" depends upon how broadly or how narrowly the two relevant terms "machine" and "thinking" are taken. There are *at least* two different interpretations of the two terms in existence and these two interpretations lead, not unnaturally, to different conclusions. Turing has proceeded to take a very broad interpretation, at least in one sense, limited in another, of the term "think" and has shown that there is a perfectly good sense of

<sup>1</sup> A. M. Turing: "Computing Machines and Intelligence." *Mind* (1950). Also in *Intelligent Machinery—Unpublished*.

<sup>2</sup> W. Mays: "Can Machines Think?" *Philosophy* (1952), pp. 148-162.

"machine" that makes the answer to our question *yes*. On the other hand Mays has taken a narrower definition that leads him to say *no* to our question. From the point of view of semantic and linguistic analysis, our question is obviously not a very important one, since the real problem seems to be to define "thinking" and also "machine," but it should be noticed that there is a more or less established sense in which the answer should be *yes*. Our next problem is to consider the reasons that Mays and Turing have for the views that they respectively urge, and their points of difference, since it appears to be a matter of confusion between them that they are really talking about different things, or rather talking about the same thing from two very different points of view. In other words we must decide what various scientists mean by the two crucial words and what interpretations seem most plausible. We have also to face the old problem of whether or not natural usage should be our guide; or perhaps we should ask:— to what extent should natural usage be our guide?

## II

Let us first turn to the objections that are voiced by Mays against the viewpoint put forward by Turing, which essentially says that, at least in principle, a "machine" can be constructed that will do anything that a human organism will. It is quite clear that he (Turing) is not thinking in terms of crude passive machines, but active machines such as digital and analogue computers and artefacts of the negative feed-back type.

The first statement of importance that is made by Mays may be quoted:—

"Perhaps it is as well to make a confession of faith here. I accept the evidence of my own introspections, as well as those of other people, that there are such things as private psychological events . . ."

This admission represents the core of May's objection. He really feels that the word "think" is, or perhaps should be, reserved for humans and he would support this claim by pointing out that machines do not have consciousness, feelings and will, etc., and the term "thinking" is properly thought of as involving these other conative aspects as well as the more cognitive ones. Mays then takes up another point made by Turing when he says:—<sup>2</sup>

"It does not follow that because q, the sonnet-writing behaviour, occurs, that it is due to p, thoughts and feelings felt; it may be due to a bank of relays or a regiment of monkeys hammering away on typewriters."

Mays' objections can so far briefly be summarized by saying that he feels that Turing has no right to include psychological terms and

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., p. 149.

<sup>2</sup> Op. cit., p. 152.

phrases which refer to the machine as "being punished and rewarded," "obeying orders," etc., without the same objective redefinition of these phrases that he gives to the word "thinking." Mays asks whether Turing would realize that it would be idiotic to talk of a "machine" enjoying itself, since the word enjoyment has a meaning only by reference to our private feelings.

What does this amount to? It amounts to the fact that Mays would appear to be saying that Turing's argument is unreasonable because he is talking about only one kind of human behaviour, principally the deductive and inductive processes, i.e. the processes of intelligence, and he is overlooking the much wider aspects of human behaviour that the machine cannot have. Mays says:—<sup>1</sup>

"It is merely a conceit of the logician to imagine that the main function of natural language is to transmit information rather than to communicate personal and social feeling."

This amounts, in this context, to no more than a different interpretation of the word "thinking" and also the word "information," since surely "information" should include personal and social feelings, although one may agree with much that underlies the words. The particular point about thinking being dependent on feelings, etc., rather than on a bank of relays carries no conviction since we might just as easily argue that human thinking is dependent on a set of neurons. We cannot show this fact for certain, for obvious reasons; but modern physiological psychology gives strong evidence to support such a belief. In any case there is no evidence of note—clearly no certainty—that machines don't have feelings in the same manner as, or similar manner to, humans. Of course this is most unlikely in any existing machine, but how can we know that it is impossible to build a machine that *has* got exactly the same feelings, willings, etc. No one, as far as the writer knows, has seriously tried to do this, for the very good reason that so far we have only been concerned with "thinking" machines of the Turing type. Thus I would conclude that Turing could well have redefined his "anthropomorphic" phrases objectively and he would not have infringed the behaviouristic viewpoint, and further that his interpretation of "thinking," which hinges primarily on the process of deduction although also including induction, is more in keeping with what we usually mean by thinking, or rather what we should mean by thinking if we were careful to strip off the relative irrelevancies of sources than Mays would admit. No doubt the accompanying feelings are of great interest to us humans in our lives, but they would not seem to have the same importance in the context of a question about machine construction, artefacts, decision procedures and the like. The absence

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., p. 156.

of the emotional aspects of thinking are on the same level as would be the absence of a liver and a pancreas or any other organ that is necessary to the human digestive system but not believed relevant, in any direct sense, to thought; it is simply an aspect that has not been mimicked, but there seems to be no reason to suppose, on this account, that it could not be.

It is well known to those working in logic, especially in the field of recursive functions, that what is called the Turing machine involved the theoretical process of passing a tape through a box which reads its instructions from the tape. Mays' criticism of this is essentially that it is the machine *and* the tape that corresponds to the "human mind," and not just a box. It is difficult to take this comment seriously since whatever the word "mind" is taken to refer to, surely it is not to some part of the organism independent of any environment. The analogy of Turing's seems perfectly justified since the most elementary considerations from psychology should convince the reader that there will be no "mind" without an environment which supplies "instructions," or more plausibly the basis in perception, for inductions. Whether or not the (black) box starts with certain biases or initial conditions that may correspond to what we vaguely refer to as innate ideas or instincts is certainly no argument against Turing's view.

It does not seem to the writer that Mays' point about Gestalten and the fact that the "human machine" probably does not work in an additive way has any relevance whatsoever, since we can certainly construct "artefacts" that have non-linear and non-additive arrangements.

When Mays argues that we cannot identify "seeing green" with certain brain-states, we are back on familiar ground. The well-known Mind-body problem. This particular problem is too complicated to discuss here at length, but it seems to the writer that this type of statement is based on a fundamental confusion created in the first place by those dualistic philosophers who insist on talking about mental and physical events in such a way that they are subsequently committed to saying that they cannot in any sense be the same, precisely because *they* started by defining them as different, usually on most inadequate and misleading grounds. This is another way of putting Mays' real objection to Turing and it will receive the sympathy of many philosophers, particularly those of a non-pragmatic persuasion. I doubt on the other hand whether it will cut any ice with harder-headed empiricists, who will continue to try and make aircraft fly even in the face of philosophers who believe that they have a proof, that it is *a priori* impossible for an aircraft to fly.

The last point in Mays' article we should mention is his statement that mechanized calculi need a power supply and mathematicians to

translate mathematical problems into a form that the machines can handle. This again appears to be irrelevant to the Turing view since there is no earthly reason to suppose that we could not construct "machines" that could do this work too. It might just as well be argued that humans need a staff of cooks and manufacturers to prepare our food and make our blankets and sheets, and so on. This simply isn't relevant. The point might be put in another way. Only a part of mathematics is machine-like in an obvious sense. That is, while there is a decision procedure for the propositional calculus, there is no such procedure for the functional calculi, indeed Church has proved that such a decision procedure can never be forthcoming. This does not mean, however, that we could not construct a "machine" that could employ all the methods of hunting for solutions that are known to man. So at this stage of the discussion I will submit that Mays has made no impression whatsoever on Turing's position.

### III

One point made by Dr. Mays in his paper is of special significance. He says that it is essential not to confuse logic with psychology. He says that a logical calculus is nearly the antithesis of thinking since it is a mechanical routine that is substituted for our vague intuitive and imprecise thought processes. This is the well-known Reichenbach distinction between the context of discovery and the context of justification. Now it is particularly important that we say a few words about this matter, since it not only links up with what was said in our last section and helps to account for what we would regard as the irrelevance of Mays' argument, it has other far-reaching consequences in the relation of science to philosophy.

To put the matter briefly, "logicism" and "psychologism" are terms that have been used by many philosophers as words of opprobrium to hurl at anyone who attempts to use scientific methods in the solution of philosophical problems. In other words, to use the Carnap terminology, we cannot attempt to place the formal analyses of pure semantics in the empirical mould of pragmatics. The empirical facts of language, he argues, are not relevant to their logical properties. Against this we have a resurgence of pragmatism under the healthy leadership of such writers as Professors Quine<sup>1</sup> and Morton White<sup>2</sup> who argue, and the writer wholly agrees with such an argument, that the division between formal and factual science is not absolute, it is at best relative. This is clearly the way to cut down the absolute dualisms of philosophy under the heading of Mind-body

<sup>1</sup> W. V. Quine: "Two Dogmas of Empiricism." In *From a Logical Point of View*. Cambridge, Mass. (1952).

<sup>2</sup> M. G. White: "The Analytic and the Synthetic: An Untenable Dualism." In John Dewey. *Philosopher of Science and Freedom*. New York. (1950).

and analytic-synthetic, and in cutting away these arbitrary fetters we lost the fear that we are committing a circularity in applying empirical science to philosophical questions. In particular it leads to a revision of the nature of logic, which may be regarded as closely related to human thinking in that it represents the ideal, best ordered and most complete of thinking processes. In practice we may not go through all the steps of a logical argument because we may quickly see that we can reduce a problem (say) to one already solved or some such shortened process as this . . . such a realization may constitute an example of what we may call "insight." However, it would be completely false to assume that these processes are entirely different. We are not necessarily aware of all the steps in the processes which our own organisms go through, and we cannot, in any event, assume on the strength of our inadequate introspections, that the neural process is not as complete as the bank of relays of the computing machine.

The point at issue here is essentially that philosophical matters can be reconstructed within a theory of behaviour as effectively as can scientific matters within a logical reconstruction. It is perhaps not worthwhile to pursue this particular argument here since those who are already persuaded will already know the argument, and those who are not already persuaded will not, in any case, be persuaded by this brief section. Nevertheless it is the underlying point and we shall say a little more about it in the next section.

#### IV

The argument so far has been to support by virtue of its objective (scientific) approach the views of Turing against the attack of Mays. But it would be foolish to suppose that a thinker as knowledgeable as Dr. Mays should be as consistently wrong as we have tended to suggest. The truth remains that they are thinking of the problem in quite different terms. Turing is arguing from the viewpoint of a mathematician and a logician and he is assuming, an assumption which is apparently ludicrous to Mays, that ultimately the ability to say merely "yes" or "no" in answer to some question is of fundamental importance. To people familiar with logic, algorithms and the like, it is easy enough to see where Turing's analysis starts. Mays on the other hand is taking a very different view of what "thinking" involves and would deny that the essence of the problem had been dealt with by Turing. Many philosophers will tend to support Mays, and some (we hope) Turing. The problem in philosophical terms reduces largely to the problem of whether or not we can absolutely separate analytic from synthetic statements, and what is equivalent, whether one accepts reductionism, or again, to state a problem

equivalent to the analytic-synthetic distinction, whether one would wish to insist on the dualism of Mind and body.

One point should now be made, the writer does not in the least wish to deny the truth of the first "confession of faith" of Mays that there are introspections and we should take our introspections seriously. The question is whether we should confuse (I believe it would be a confusion) the issue by introducing our introspective beliefs and our feelings, artistic and otherwise, about ourselves into the objective or behaviouristic data with which the psychologist deals. Not of course that introspections are not at the moment vital to psychology, but they are not vital to a discussion of machines and thinking, when the question is one of principle. Whether or not you would support Turing or Mays would depend on answers to these questions, all too briefly mentioned, about the relation of philosophy to science, or so the present writer claims. If this thesis is correct, then the answer to our question reduces to an already well-known issue, and the way we would answer that problem.

## V

Granted that we can say little more about the problem of machines and thinking, from an analytic viewpoint, we might take the opportunity to add a few words on it from the second point of view, that of physiology and psychology. It is here that the title question can be given a significance, and to which can be found a meaningful answer. The full possible usefulness of Cybernetics in general has not by any means been worked out as a model or as a construction method in either psychology or physiology. But there seems to be no objection in principle to the notion of treating organisms as if they were *machines*. Indeed, and this is the final point, we cannot see what aspects of human behaviour cannot be mirrored by artefacts. Indeed ultimately such an extension of the notion of a *machine* makes it quite impossible to decide where a *machine* ceases and organisms begin. In this it is similar to the biochemist's difficulty in saying where *non-living* "organisms" cease and living ones begin. The conditions that Mays uses as a distinction are perfectly reasonable if we use the word "think" and the word "machine" in the restricted sense that they are now often, even usually, used and thought of, but these same conditions cannot be shown to be in any way a barrier to the thesis that *machines* (taken sufficiently broadly) can be made to do anything that organisms can. Our trouble intuitively is that we are continually being made aware that *machines* are *constructed* but forget that organisms are *constructed* also. We dwell on the fact that machines can only do what we build into them to do and forget that exactly the same condition holds for organisms.

# COULD MACHINES BE MADE TO THINK?

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The most significant developments in modern psychological theories have been the increased attention paid to Cybernetic models. Indeed increasingly there is the tendency to regard the process of thinking as close to that of an inductive logical *machine*. The question of difference that we have discussed at some length already comes to its behaviouristic head, in the question:— How should we regard the emotive or conative aspects of behaviour? Doubtless they are more basic (i.e. older and earlier in phylogeny) but it is doubtful whether we would want to say that "thinking" was more than incidentally connected with these processes. Emotion is regarded as either a disruptive or constructive background to thinking. There is still much argument about the role of emotions in behaviour and their connection with the autonomic nervous system, but certainly from a behaviouristic point of view there can be no reason to doubt the ability of science to reconstruct such states in analogues.

What evidence is available to psychologists tends to suggest that humans operate on the same basis as an inductive logical machine, whose memory—part of the basis for inductions—is not wholly reliable, perhaps by virtue of emotive contamination, and whose inductions do not always thus range over all the available evidence in the broadest sense. No doubt the best available inductive machine would make inductions much like humans when certain randomizers or certain further error-considerations were introduced. In any case we can quite obviously construct a *machine* that plays the human role when we are capable of describing that role. To deny that we are capable of describing it with sufficient completeness would demand proof, for which there would seem to be little or no evidence. In the same way there seems to be no good reason for saying that we cannot construct artefacts with a "stream of consciousness." This is what so many seem to deny; but let them first describe what they mean, and as they do we shall construct the necessary *machine*.

The fact that "machines" are not, so far, constructed by the same protoplasmic means as humans are constructed, should not be any hindrance to the mimicking of the thinking operations. There is of course no reason to suppose that we could not construct *machines*—should we call them organisms now?—that can reproduce themselves,<sup>1</sup> and do all that Mays says a machine cannot; the word "machine" has, if you like, changed its meaning. But are we to say that *machines*, in the sense we are discussing them, are the same as what we commonly mean by "machine"? They clearly are not what we have often meant, but equally clearly they come within

<sup>1</sup> See J. G. Kemeny. "Man viewed as a Machine," *Scientific American*, 1955, pp. 58–67.

the compass of what we could mean. In short, for natural language purposes, it seems worth separating organisms from artefacts, say, but we shall not pretend the distinction is more than a matter of degree.

Perhaps the following somewhat humorous question that can be asked is relevant to the discussion. If I assert to some man "Your wife is a machine. I happen to know that she was constructed in a workshop on the South Coast," the man's answer may be "I don't believe it," but when you answer "But she is, and you can't tell me anything that your wife can do that a machine can't (in principle)," the man is left with a sort of nagging doubt, or perhaps with some difficulty as to how to state his case, since it is not easy to see what he can assert clearly that she has got, or can do, that cannot have been constructed in a workshop.

We can now *roughly* divide the people who have answers to our original question into three groups:—(1) those, like Mays, who seem to regard the answer as definitely no, for the reasons he gives; (2) those, like Ashby, who seem to say definitely yes, and (3) those like Turing (although he may be said to come under (2)) who seem, and the writer would be in full agreement with such a view, to admit the question is open to serious semantic difficulties which tends to reduce its answer to trivially yes or trivially no. At the same time the writer sees no reason to doubt that the views of those in group (2) should be acted upon, as it is not obvious to him that we cannot build a machine or artefact to do anything a human being can do.

I would like to believe that the relative futility of discussing the matter "could machines be made to think?" has now been made clear. The problem is not one that merits much discussion as the problem is empirical. What can we actually construct ourselves, either in hardware or in theoretical terms, and what can these constructions actually do? To talk of their activities by reference to the same terminology as is derived from introspection, is to risk the sort of rebuke that Mays gives. It seems pardonable, however, if it is realized that we are in fact not relying on fixed usage in natural language—if we were, we should lean more toward Mays and more away from Turing—we are in fact stretching our common usage to meet new sorts of cases and this surely is the cause of much confusion and the reduction to near-meaninglessness of such questions as "could machines be made to think?" If it were insisted that the interpretation of *machine* meant any existing *machine*<sup>1</sup> then the case for an affirmative answer could hardly be so strong.

*University of Bristol.*

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, J. R. Kantor, *The Logic of Modern Science*, Principia Press, 1953, p. 21 *et seq.*

# PHILOSOPHICAL SURVEY

## PHILOSOPHY IN ITALY

Eugenio Garin's book, *Cronache di filosofia italiana, 1900-1943* (Bari, Laterza, 1955) has given rise to much discussion in Italy. Eugenio Garin is noted particularly for his studies in the philosophy and life of the Italian Renaissance; in this field he is the most competent scholar in Italy, and among the most competent in the world. His latest researches, collected in *Medioevo e Rinascimento* (Bari, Laterza, 1954), are among the finest and most illuminating, for in them a sound and fruitful interpretative hypothesis on the structure of this historical period is used with great skill to elucidate an extremely rich and varied documentary material, much of which has been recently discovered. Among Garin's other contributions to the history of philosophy it will suffice to mention here a copious work, *Storia della filosofia italiana dal Medioevo al Risorgimento*, published in two volumes in 1947 (Milan, pub. Francesco Vallardi). What makes the value of these *Cronache* is Garin's evident honesty and moderation in judgment and his scrupulous documentation; frequently the author refrains from making any pronouncement on a personage, but a judgment emerges clearly from the authentic quotations in the text (*ex ore tuo te judico*). Garin has called his book "Chronicles" because it does not make mention of all the personages of the period under consideration; it does not outline the philosophical systems, and it discusses, besides philosophers, minor and marginal figures, whether of polemics or of facts, that serve to depict the period in question. But in reality it is a work of history in the best meaning of the term. It is the history of a failure, or rather, of several failures. The failure of positivism, which, in its Italian elaborators in the first decades of the century, turned more and more in the direction of idealism and spiritualism, reversing the romantic exaltation of science (from which nineteenth-century positivism took its rise) by depreciating and ignoring it. Failure of the mysticizing and irrational tendencies (generally inspired by Sorel), presented as the ideological counterpart of fascism. Failure of the idealistic and realistic opponents of the romantic idealism of Croce and Gentile, who had nothing to offer in its place but forms of compromise and verbal reconciliations. Lastly failure of that very idealism of Croce and Gentile, which Garin nevertheless does not mean to undervalue, considering it rather as the profoundest and most salutary experiment of Italian philosophy of this period, which finally, and particularly in the course of the second world war, revealed its insufficiency. In this period, says Garin (p. 511), "Italian philosophical discussion, when not academic and evasive, hungered after bodily, worldly, and truly human experience; after the works of human hands, made by tangible labours, far from exhausted verbiage; after liberty, not a mere matter of words, but lived to its fullest extent, defended against continual negations, affirmed in the face of cultural and political violations; after a human society beyond the master-and-servant relationship, of men coexisting in collaboration." It would be impossible, I believe, to express better the condition of the living part of Italian philosophy during the second world war and at its end. "All who have lived through to the end," adds Garin, "the collapse of the old rational order without losing their reason have learned that the immutable and objective order was only the crystallization of a human product, constructed and destroyed in the course of history. Human reason will have to construct yet others, better suited to the needs of life as it is lived. And it is to this end

that philosophical thought has turned today, whether it applies itself to a study of the past in order to avoid running unwarily into fresh barriers, or whether it elaborates adequate instruments to take the place of those that have been found wanting." It is doubtless a question of the reduction of the task of philosophy to more modest proportions, commensurate with human possibilities, but also more effective and fruitful. And in consequence "a language common to at least a part of thinking Italy" has been formed, and there has been fixed "a precise boundary between whoever sees in the philosopher only a man who works with men and for men in precise and definite tasks, in an attempt at critical clarification and common construction, and whoever imagines him as contemplating with detached mind the Infinite Absolute and announcing it for all time in absolute and definite terms, as if man was neither born nor died, and did not have to struggle and suffer." (P. 523.)

Ugo Spirito's latest book, *Significato del nostro tempo* (Florence, Sansoni 1955), also contains, among other items, an essay on contemporary Italian philosophical thought. But the difference in method, procedure, and evaluation between Spirito's essay and Garin's book is very significant. Garin documents his own statements at every step with quotations and precise references, but there is no documentation whatever in Spirito's essay. For that reason many of the judgments contained in this essay leave us somewhat perplexed. Take for example the statement that "modern thought has progressively aimed at determining the reality in thought, eliminating by degrees all transcendence and all presupposed objectivity." (P. 227.) Many currents of modern thought cannot be described by this formula, and they are those that nowadays display the greatest force and vitality. One of these is precisely the phenomenology to which Spirito devotes an essay, but for some reason he takes phenomenology for phenomenism. Then there is no documentation for his statement that "the essence of Italian thought" is "hypercriticism," wherefore "no speculative position subjected to its analysis succeeds in hiding its own metaphysical contradiction and its own critical insufficiency" (pp. 228-9). Anyone who, like the present writer, is often called upon to select new Italian professors of philosophy, and is consequently obliged to read a large part of Italian philosophical production, cannot help a feeling of weariness when confronted with much of this, which continues to ruminate threadbare themes, dogmatically representing as "absolute truth" theses for which it does not offer the smallest proof or evidence, neglecting or ignoring analyses, experiences, facts or situations without whose support and interpretation philosophy operates in the void. Spirito does not deny the crisis or failure of romantic Italian idealism, but he maintains that the only alternative remaining open is "problematicism." And what is problematicism? It is the radical, utmost consciousness of the crisis itself (p. 37), the "incapacity to escape out of contradiction"; and yet it is not relativism, because "it does not understand how it can renounce the hope of the absolute" (p. 229). Thus defined, Spirito's problematicism appears as the messianic expectation of an absolute truth on the part of whoever maintains that an absolute truth is contradictory. What apt significance, what instrument of research or of action, this faith suggests, Spirito does not say. It may also be suspected that he is waiting for such a faith in absolute truth to be imposed on him, and that this is in reality only the expectation of a philosophical, religious or political dictatorship. This suspicion seems to gather strength from what he says about the "Two conceptions of liberty," which are those of individualism and of totalitarianism (or communism), and from his observation that "the passage from individualism to socialism (totalitarian socialism or communism) is becoming more and more inevitable."

(p. 68). But here it seems that Spirito's prophecy is suggested to him by the old antinomy between the individual and society, an antinomy that no one would nowadays admit as the theoretical foundation of the conflict between individual liberty and the exigencies of social life.

The first five volumes, out of the projected fifteen, of the *Grande Antologia filosofica* have appeared, under the direction of Umberto Antonio Padovani (Milan, Marzorati, 1954). Each school or tendency and every important author has been entrusted to a particular scholar, who has written a brief introduction, compiled a limited bibliography, and selected a certain number of texts. The same treatment has been accorded to certain themes deemed fundamental. Thus the two volumes on classical thought contain, besides the treatment of the schools and authors, a handling of the following themes, likewise entrusted to different writers: religion, aesthetics, the concept of history, science, pedagogy, politics and law, and economic doctrines. Similarly, of the three volumes devoted to Christian thought the last contains studies and texts on: theology and philosophy, aesthetics, historiography, science, pedagogy, political thought, the philosophy of law and economic doctrines. This distribution of the work, while enabling the specific abilities of many scholars to be used, has at the same time caused a certain disparity in the value of the treatments, some of which are undoubtedly well carried out and informed, while others clearly seem superficial or critically inadequate. There is also observable, especially in the volumes dedicated to Christian thought, the weight of Catholic ideology and of dogmatic preconceptions that have guided and limited the work of the compilers. Some disproportions are evident. For instance, the anthology of Aristotelian texts is altogether inadequate, in quality and quantity. Equally inadequate are the treatment and texts of the pre-Augustinian Fathers (eight pages of Origen, a page and a half of Gregory of Nissa, and so on), while on the other hand the space devoted to the post-Augustinian Fathers seems disproportionate. It is understood that in such a vast work imperfections, defects and errors cannot be altogether avoided; however, with regard to this anthology it may be observed that its compilers would have benefited from a less prejudiced and more calmly objective point of view. It is certainly meritorious of the director and publisher of the work to have wished to provide Italian students with a useful means of study. The impression is however unavoidable that, considering the scale on which it has been planned, it falls between two stools; it is too vast and massive for students and dilettantes, and too limited and inadequate for specialists.

NICOLA ABBAGNANO.

(Translated from the Italian by Beatrice Allen)

## NEW BOOKS

*A Study of History.* By ARNOLD TOYNBEE. Vols. VII-X (Oxford University Press, £7 10s.)

In the earlier volumes of *A Study of History*, Professor Toynbee defined the breakdown of civilizations as "failures in the audacious attempts to ascend from the level of primitive humanity to the height of some superhuman kind of living." He further spoke of such breakdowns in "non-material" terms as the "loss of creative power in the souls of creative individuals or minorities which divests them of their magic power to influence the souls of the uncreative masses." However questionable may be the assumptions of this view point, it nevertheless seemed apparent that the writer of the study deplored the breakdowns and failures, and did not invite us to rejoice at them. Yet even in an early volume [Vol. V, part 5] he had hinted at a view which regards the world as well lost and which cuts across the allegedly empirical definition of civilizations as a species of society: churches, too, he suggested, were representatives of another species of society, as distinct from the species civilization as the latter were from primitive societies. The concluding four volumes now before us are very much concerned with this new "species" and with the development of this second view.

Thus in Volume VII, containing parts 6 and 7 on "Universal States" and "Universal Churches" respectively, Toynbee clearly develops his suspicions of merely material success. He rejects the claims of universal states to represent their respective civilizations at their apexes. Instead, they are a product of disintegration and decay, the last desperate throw of a minority which has lost its "creative power" and must now maintain itself by force. Yet however valuable the institutions which are the conditions for the widespread peace maintained by the universal state, these cannot absorb the "creative power" present in the warring parochial states of the time of troubles. Instead, the universal churches, creations of the "internal proletariat," whose development is favoured by the institutions and conditions brought about by the universal state, now absorb and receive new energy for creative action which the latter is unable to employ. It is characteristic of Professor Toynbee's approach that the example which he gives to indicate this transference is that men are now ready to die as martyrs for the new church.

Universal states exist for the sake of the universal churches or "higher religions." Toynbee now decisively rejects the view he considered in the earlier volumes, namely that the main role played by universal churches was their provision of the chrysalis from which the offspring civilization was to be born, that their significance lay in the way in which they bridged the interregnum between civilizations, carrying over a precious freight so that some might start with a heritage which put them on a higher footing than their forebears. Though some churches have fulfilled this function, this is not their essential purpose and, indeed, they may compromise their higher goals by serving to bring more civilizations to birth. Interregna are now not to be deplored as unfortunate breaks in the onward and upward march of civilization —now they appear to Professor Toynbee as occasions for "flashes of intense spiritual illumination and bursts of fervent spiritual activity." [Vol. VII p. 425]. The old terminology of "Dark" Ages, adopted by the eighteenth century philosophers of history, has now undergone a simple reversal of colouring. The cyclic rhythm of rise and fall of civilizations, allegedly discovered by the empirical method, is now interpreted as the revolutions of the

"wheel" which carries the "chariot" of religion farther and farther towards its goal. Why should the descending movement of civilization be the sovereign means for carrying religion forward and upward? Professor Toynbee answers his own question by saying that this is but an exemplification of a Divine Law which decrees that spiritual progress can only be achieved at the cost of material tribulation. "The circumstances favourable to spiritual and secular progress are not only different but antithetical" [Vol. VII, p. 425]. This may well reinforce our doubt as to whether Professor Toynbee is clear what he means when he refers to churches as a higher species of *society*. Surely the term "society" carries more mundane considerations along with it.

Drawing his prophetic mantle closely around him, Professor Toynbee looks at our present situation—employing a strange trick of style whereby he refers to "Mid-twentieth Century Western Civilization" in the *past* tense. This suggests that he is speaking retrospectively, from a future where prophecies are already fulfilled and the issue of our present condition already a matter of historical fact. Thus he forecasts the rise of a new Higher Religion, which will employ the material means furnished by a world-wide western civilization, which unites the earth culturally and economically, if not politically. This is to be a syncretistic mixture of the four extant higher religions, Christianity, Islam, Mahāyāna, and Hinduism. Our doubts as to the practical possibilities of this development are stilled by the following words:

"On the longer view that was visible to the eye of faith, it could be forecast that the driver would master his team and that the chariot would continue to mount on the heavenward course that it had been following continuously since before Abraham was" [Vol. VII, p. 444].

The above extract, incidentally, is a fair example of Toynbee's style in these later volumes. He delights in expressing himself in the words of the Bible, and embedded in this rich impasto of Biblical phraseology, selfconsciously applied with footnote references, we find an encrustation of his own abstracta, entities like "Subconscious Psyche," plus further additions of mythological impedimenta, taken from a syncretistic palette which includes Nirvana, hubris, the Yin and the Yang, Original Sin, and so on.

Undismayed by the disquieting possibility that the disintegration or breakdown of our own precariously balanced civilization might make impossible the material conditions for any kind of social life to be sensibly called civilized, the prophet continues: it might

"be augured that, if a secularized Western civilization were to break down in its turn, having swept all its contemporaries into its net, the living religions would not only survive but would grow in wisdom and stature as the result of fresh experience of secular catastrophe" [Vol. VII, p. 448].

Here we feel that the apocalyptic vision has indeed blinded the eye of faith to all mundane considerations.

It is evident that, with these concluding volumes, Professor Toynbee has vacated the field of philosophy of history for what might be called a théology of history. The former, as distinct from the latter, had its birth in eighteenth century optimism and rationalism, and rested on the presupposition that an empirical study would reveal laws of historical development, indicative of a generally progressive tendency, to be made smoother by the removal of reactionary individuals or groups which stood as temporary obstructions in the way. This Panglossian optimism never rested on very sure foundations; yet though keen minds never needed the evidence of the grim events of the

Twentieth Century to shake their belief in the inevitable progress, nevertheless these have created the appropriate atmosphere for pessimism. So Spengler's *Decline of the West*, the pessimistic view of human history as inevitable revolutions of the wheel of a birth-death-birth cycle, of development inevitably followed by decay, was a natural cousin of the earlier view, still leaving its presuppositions uncriticized. Now Toynbee presents a third stage in this development. Spengler's pessimistic relativism is replaced by optimism, which is not that of the eighteenth-century originators of philosophy of history, but an apocalyptic optimism which harks back to the older theological view. This can be seen by the way in which the old central concepts are "spiritualized" by Toynbee. The unity of history and the notion of historical laws of development, key notions of traditional philosophy of history where their application was to social and political events, are now translated to a higher sphere. Just as "churches" replace "civilizations" as higher species of society, so the unity of history becomes the unity of the higher religions—with the ultimate, inevitable objective the syncretistic goal, now to be achieved in place of the mere "mundane" unification of civil society which Kant held out as the goal of historical development. Similarly, historical "laws" are taken up into God's laws to man.

In Vol. IX, Professor Toynbee does make some telling rebukes against the antinomianist historians who repeat H. A. L. Fisher's dictum by rote. We may fairly agree that the extra information on civilizations, brought to light by the archaeologist, at least leaves it an "open question" as to whether the empirical data justify the employment of some concept of law in application to history. Indeed, Professor Toynbee does make a telling point against such metaphysical cartographers who would seek to draw a line upon the map which separates the law-abiding territory of the natural sciences from the anarchistic jungle of human affairs. Surely it is paradoxical, he suggests (Vol. IX, p. 205), that just when historians are extending their territory into those fields of everyday activity which supply the sociologist and economist with data for their "laws" relating to human affairs, the former should continue to deny the applicability of the concept. Yet when Toynbee continues by raising the question "Do such laws of Nature governing human affairs turn out, when we understand them to be inexorable?" [Vol. IX, p. 218], then it is evident that he has been misled by the insufficiently analysed concept of law whose anthropomorphism he himself has admitted leads to unavoidable confusions. If he could have disabused himself of the notion that a scientific "law" is a commandment or in any sense inexorably decrees the actual succession of events, then it would have been unnecessary for him to have called in an appeal to the "Laws of God" to make good the dilemma of freedom versus determinism. For surely the claim that the historical "laws of nature" only "make sense" when they are pictured as the "wheels that God has fitted to His Own Chariot" is not a proposition that any empirical appeal to the data of history can either prove or disprove. It is the basic confusion of this imperfectly analysed concept of law of history that blinds Toynbee to the inconsequence of statistics to the Prophet's Message, and, equally, the inappropriateness of Prophecy to the interpretation of statistical evidence.

The dilemma of a Christian philosophy of history is that the crucial events of its Sacred History—the Fall, the Reincarnation, the Last Days—belong to a different order of things and lie outside the empirical history of the City of Man. The promised City of God, the apocalyptic Fourth Age, remains obstinately outside historical time, and only the heretical opinions of a Joachim de Floris can effect a junction, displeasing both to theologian and to historian. Toynbee notes Collingwood's warnings against the inescapable eschatology of

Christian philosophy of history and its tendency to look for the essence of History outside history itself "by looking away from man's actions in order to detect the plan of God." Yet he is confident that the criticism does not apply to his own view. I doubt whether many of his readers will share his confidence. His Christian critic, Mr. Martin Wright, to whom he has so generously given space in notes and appendix, on one occasion disputes his assertion that Christianity can make claim to be the carrier or originator of the ideal of individual liberty. Christianity, Mr. Wright suggests, is in fact capable of accommodating itself to any political regime. Here, surely, is an expression of the dilemma of any Christian philosophy of history. Its values are never wholly of this world, and events of a historical nature, social states of affairs, are only indirectly its concern.

Finally, there is one last observation to be made on this attempt to see human history sub specie aeternitas—from a Pisgah height which approaches God's view. Traditionally, the heavenly outlook on human affairs has been thought to be marked by two characteristics—a concern for even the apparently most insignificant individual event, together with a compassion which is necessarily dependent on this concern. Professor Toynbee's report from his exalted eminence is singularly lacking in both these attributes, in spite of the vast amount of learning and factual erudition that illustrates his pages. Though he repeatedly claims, as an article of faith, that the significance of individual relationships is the root of all spiritual significance, very few features of individuals are discernible in the historical pages of his work. Civilizations, societies, armies on the march, the clash of sects and churches, the spread of systems of belief or institutions—these fill the pages with very rarely any glimpse of the individual faces of the marchers, the inner experience of the worshippers, or even the individual personalities of the "creative" power-wielders who appear only in their hieratic roles. Is it significant that one of the comparatively few occasions when a human individual does emerge from this impersonal record, is that on which St. Daniel the Styliste makes a brief descent from his pillartop in the year A.D. 475?

P. J. BINDLEY.

*Answer to Job.* By C. G. JUNG. (Routledge and Kegan Paul. 1954. Pp. xviii + 194. Price 12s. 6d.)

It is difficult to believe that the Jung whose writings every psychologist knows and respects, wrote this book. He takes the Bible, and the apocryphal book of Enoch, with the undiscriminating credulity of the fundamentalist. He ignores the critical position with regard to Scripture, taking everything at face value, and apparently regarding John the Apostle as author of the Johannine literature. He even thinks it worth while to explain that Cain's wife must have belonged to another order of creation not bearing the divine stamp, but created as are the beasts. Does he mean an anthropoid ape?

Yahweh of the Old Testament is, we learn, a fierce, incalculable tyrant. Jung does not treat that as due to the way men looked at God, but as the actual nature of God, who gradually, apparently, reforms till we get the picture of God given by Christ, though even then God isn't quite what He ought to be. The petition about not being led into temptation shows that "Christ considers it appropriate to remind his father of his destructive inclinations toward mankind and to beg him to desist from them"! The atonement is "a reparation for the wrong done to man by God." Satan is God's bad son and we learn of "Christ's victory over his brother Satan."

Jung contends that God always has wanted to become man and that applies not only to the Incarnation but to individual man. Together with this, is a surprising leaning towards Roman Catholic dogma, for example the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption of Mary. The latter is, we learn, "in every respect timely" and "the most important religious event since the Reformation." Indeed the Pope was "evidently inspired by the workings of the Holy Ghost" in announcing the dogma. Its value to Jung is that it introduces a feminine element in this notion of incarnation. Protestantism, Jung says, is nothing but a man's religion. Yet one cannot imagine the Roman Church approving these strange speculations, or any Protestant theologian either. It is literalism run mad and cannot but detract from one's respect for Jung's psychology. "Corruptio optimi pessima." E. S. WATERHOUSE.

*God and Space-Time.* By ALFRED P. STIERNOTTE, with a foreword by Henry Nelson Wieman. (New York: Philosophical Library. 1954. Pp. xxv + 455. \$3.00 net.)

With the rise of linguistic philosophies metaphysical studies like that of Alexander have fallen into disrepute. This is a pity since the incidental thinking contained in such studies is often of a high order. This book is an examination of the part played by Deity in Alexander's *Space, Time and Deity*, with especial reference to his realism and value theory. It is as good a piece of scholarly research as one is likely to come across nowadays and is in the tradition of the great philosophical commentaries. One wonders whether Stiernotte's way of setting about the problem has been the correct one. He has discussed Alexander's *Space, Time and Deity* in the light of his own immediate reading of the text and that of other commentators, instead of historically, from the point of view of Alexander's own philosophical development. For a system like that of Alexander which emphasizes historicity this is something of an anomaly.

He is unaware, as are most of Alexander's commentators, that Laird in his evaluation of Alexander's work used only a small part of the data available to him. The Alexander collection of correspondence, reviews and unpublished articles in the Manchester University Library throws a much greater light on Alexander's philosophical development and the nature of his doctrines than any commentary so far published. A preliminary examination of these documents shows that there was a continuous development of Alexander's views that his early idealism shades off into his later naturalism and that his epistemology and theology were developed prior to his metaphysics, despite Alexander's statement in *Space, Time and Deity* that his metaphysics is prior to his epistemology.

Stiernotte's book is divided into two parts; in the first part the main ideas of Alexander's system are expounded. The three aspects of his conception of God and Deity are then discussed; their metaphysical nature, the nature of the religious emotion, and the relationship of Deity to values. Alexander's conception of Deity is based on a theory of levels strangely reminiscent of the modern doctrine of language levels. He accepts a realist conception of the nature of religious emotion, though values are regarded as human inventions. Stiernotte indicates that certain features of Alexander's system such as his coherence theory of truth, have elements in common with Absolute Idealism.

The second part consists of evaluations and criticisms. Alexander's view

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are compared with that of other evolutionary philosophers, Bergson, Lloyd Morgan, Smuts and Whitehead, and with recent cosmological enquiries. Stiernotte is certainly not uncritical of Alexander, he disagrees with him that values are human inventions. He holds they are objective and attempts to reconstruct Alexander's system by postulating a primordial matrix of Space-Time-Value. He believes that Alexander's cosmic extrapolation of the mind-body formula should be interpreted in a metaphorical rather than metaphysical sense. It is doubtful whether Alexander would have taken very kindly to this interpretation.

This is unquestionably a competent piece of Alexander exegesis and criticism. Throughout the work there is, however, only the most passing reference to recent philosophical doctrines. It would have been interesting to see how Alexander's system stands up to the modern onslaught against metaphysics.

W. MAYS.

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*A Philosophy of the Real and Possible.* By HARRY TODD COSTELLO. Woodbridge Lectures No. 4. Columbia University Press. (London: Geoffrey Cumberlege. 1954. Pp. 153. Price 22s. net.)

What a change this book is from the usual kind of philosophical writing. It sparkles with fun. Though it is a serious work, essentially an account of American philosophical thought, it has the salty tang of the *New Yorker*. It contains a number of amusing anecdotes, and some of them are at times to say the least, somewhat full-blooded. Professor Costello is a wise and humane individual with a keen sense of humour who is able to enjoy a joke at his own expense.

This work introduces us to American philosophical thinkers about whom we know all too little in this country. Costello knew Palmer, Royce, James and Santayana, and he gives interesting vignettes of them, making them come to life in their early twentieth-century Harvard setting. We get glimpses of Santayana in his black Spanish cloak, Royce's gnome-like Mr. Jiggs figure, and of William James lecturing in halting and muffled tones so very different from his lucid written style. There is also an amusing account of Costello's attendance at one of Bergson's lectures in Paris which began with a free fight for front row seats. His anecdotes sometimes misfire, as when he attributes a wife to the bachelor Samuel Alexander.

In five lectures, he touches in turn on logic, mathematics, epistemology, ethics, aesthetics and includes snippets from the history of philosophy. The book ends with an appreciation of the naturalism of Frederick Woodbridge in whose memory the lectures were given. As far as his own views are concerned, Costello is an empiricist, a strong believer in a perceptual world and a physical world, and in Eddington's two tables. He champions the view that a general science of order is prior to logic and mathematics, and claims that mathematics is synthetic and not analytic. Costello's excursions into philosophical biography are based on his belief that the philosophy one professes is intimately connected with one's own personality.

Despite the slightness of this volume which is also indexless, it contains a number of penetrating insights and criticisms. Its philosophical point of view seems, however, rather dated; its sub-title might well have been "Harvard by Gaslight."

W. MAYS.

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*Aesthetics and Criticism.* By H. Osborne. (Routledge and Kegan Paul. Pp. 341.  
Price 28s.)

This is a crusade on behalf of an "objective" theory of the "peculiar excellence of works of art," the theory that their beauty is "real" in the same sense as their primary qualities. It is not concerned with nature, which is said only to be called beautiful in a different sense. This thesis logically necessitates a rejection of all "expressionist" theories, since, the author rightly recognizes what is not always recognized by their defenders, that what is expressive to one man may not be expressive to another. He also makes the good point that since expressiveness may be held a three-term relation involving originator, medium and recipient, it is not a term happily used of natural beauty except with theological assumptions; perhaps "embodiment" should be preferred. Unfortunately Mr. Osborne generally assumes that "expression" of an emotion means its stimulation or infection. He holds that the obvious diversity of appreciation, even among reputable critics, is due to the influence of various wrong aesthetic theories, and does not consider another possible cause, namely that the subjective and expressionist view is correct. For if this is so, genuine but different aesthetic experiences may, and indeed must be stimulated in different persons by the same presentation. Moreover some good critics who differ, as Johnson and Lamb, might seem to have no aesthetic theory, and some who have one give verdicts inconsistent with it.

The author's own view is that the peculiar excellence of works of art lies in their being "organic wholes of configuration," that is, wholes where every part partakes in the nature of the whole and no part can be changed without changing that nature. But apart from the question whether this is true of all works of art (say, the Iliad or Westminster Abbey) and them only (not, say, of an athlete's body), a surprise is sprung upon the reader when he comes to the statement of what the work of art or organic whole is. It turns out not to be the configuration of colours, shapes, sounds or of words and sentences and meanings actually produced by the artist. It is "a characteristic of sense-perception, and to this only beauty must be ascribed." The potentiality is only "actualized" when "a competent person" apprehends the physical configuration. As no person's actualization can be certainly identified with the artist's or anybody else's, it is hard to see how this theory will advance "scientific criticism." Few subjectivists would ask more.

It is a pity that readers may, from the start, be discouraged by the style of this book. It is diffuse and repetitive in belabouring theories, surely not moribund, such as those of literal mimicry, mere quantity of pleasure, moral or intellectual edification, social utility, excitement of the passions. It is brusque and dogmatic in dictating the author's own view. After quoting with approval sweeping condemnations of nearly all predecessors he adds, "I would exempt from these strictures my own book *Theory of Beauty*." But if he owes little else to any previous writer he owes that title. Or is this irony?

The present work has more than its fair share of misprints.

E. F. CARRITT.

*Utopian Fantasy:* A study of Utopian Fiction since the end of the Nineteenth Century. By RICHARD GERBER. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul 1955. Pp. xii + 162. Price 16s.)

Dr. Gerber's work lies in the no-man's-land between political philosophy and literature. Though it shows at times considerable philosophical insight, it is

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as its sub-title suggests, largely a literary study. It deals with the origins and developments of the more recent Utopian writing, especially with the phenomenon of its rapid growth over the last fifty years. Dr. Gerber lists about three hundred such works written between 1901 and 1951.

His point is that in the past sociologists and philosophers have given us summaries and criticisms of the programmes of social reform contained in Utopian literature, and attempted to define the principles of Utopian thought. Few, however, have considered Utopian writing as a literary medium. In the present study he is primarily concerned with evaluating the main themes underlying Utopian literature, endeavouring to show that they are the outcome of a comprehensive imagination and way of life.

In the older Utopias with their emphasis on the working out of general principles, likeness to real life was of little moment. With the development of the Utopian novel, the hopes and fears of western man are now translatable into a more realistic form. Instead of discussions of abstract ideas we are given detailed descriptions of the interplay of the Utopian *dramatis personae*.

The original Utopia depicted by Sir Thomas More exemplifies the desire to create the best of all possible worlds. Under the influence of the Darwinian evolutionary doctrine, progress becomes an important element in Utopian literature. The modern Utopian attitude then arises and with it the belief in the miraculous power of unlimited evolution. But after two world wars, the rise of dictatorships and the dangers of the atomic bomb, Utopian optimism wears thin. Under the pressure of contemporary events Utopia takes on a more socially realistic character. It is no longer perfect, it has become a place of power and fear, in which the social discontents and moral dilemmas of the present are written large. This is reflected in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and George Orwell's *1984*. In these novels power is used unscrupulously and mankind subjected to subtle but ruthless forms of oppression.

This work might well have included some reference to psycho-analytic doctrine which together with social disenchantment is probably at the root of the modern Utopian conception of human nature. It is not enough to lay it at the door of an unanalysed Utopian imagination. Nevertheless, Dr. Gerber has done a most thorough and able piece of work in delineating the chief literary tendencies of recent Utopian fantasy.

W. MAYS.

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*The Essence of Philosophy*. By WILHELM DILTHEY. Translated by S. A. Emery and W. T. Emery. (University of North Carolina Press, 1954. Pp. xii+78. Paper \$1.50, cloth \$2.50.)

It was time that some specimens of Dilthey's writing should be made available in English. Translations have already appeared in French and Italian. The present translators have done well in choosing to give us *Das Wesen der Philosophie*. This is a work of manageable compass, published in Dilthey's last years and therefore presenting his mature thought. It is complete in itself and it deals with a problem which in one way or another concerns all philosophers today.

The approach adopted here may seem strange at first to readers who come to it from the British philosophical tradition. Yet points of contact are not lacking. Dilthey, like ourselves, is aware of a change in the philosophical situation and a need to reassess our philosophical inheritance. Like many of ourselves he believes that the way forward now is to stop trying to write what used to be called "metaphysics" and to carry through the principle of empiri-

cism to its full consequences. The way in which he sets about this task, however, can be understood only in the context of German philosophy as it was fifty or more years ago, and in the light of his own personal interests. In this particular book he is not concerned so much to point the way forward as to understand what philosophy has been and meant in the past. Regarding "philosophy" as a name which people have agreed to give to a very varied assortment of intellectual activities, he asks what common feature of these activities has led to their long association with one another. The result is a historical survey accompanied by elements of psychological and sociological analysis.

The analysis shows what philosophers in the past have been doing, and also how by doing it they ran into an impasse. Philosophy has sprung from the abiding human need to achieve integration in thought and life. Its aims have been (1) to set every sectional idea or activity in its context as a part of life, (2) to take nothing uncritically, to seek a reasonable ground for all principles of thought or action, and (3) to express the results of (1) and (2) in a logically watertight system of doctrine. While (1) and (2) are of course possible a perpetually continuing tasks, (3) can now be seen to be impossible. Instead we must (4) analyse more closely the relation between experience and the various interpretative schemes which we apply to it. Some age-old controversies have arisen through trying to force a decision between schemes of interpretation which can and should be regarded as complementary to one another.

This book has value as showing what Dilthey thought philosophy has been and should be, but it contains little of the contribution which he claimed to be himself making. For his theory of expression and understanding, and for his analysis of historical thinking, we must look to other works bearing directly on these subjects.

The present translation is disfigured by occasional inaccuracies, several of which seriously affect the sense. For example, in the second sentence on page 10, "it succeeded in ending" should be "the aim was to end," and "the Enlightenment" should be "enlightenment." On page 12, line 25, the "followers of Alexander the Great should be his "successors." On page 46, line 2: "distinguish" should be "disintegrate." On page 49 the sixth sentence down should read: "From the peculiar attitude of the religious persons involved (which had its presuppositions in an older circle of dogmas) arose in the former case the vision of escape from the chain of birth, works, retribution and transmigration by means of knowledge, in which the soul grasps its identity with *brahman*."

H. A. HODGES.

*The Principles of World Citizenship.* By L. JONATHAN COHEN. (Basil Blackwell, Oxford. 1954. Pp. viii + 104. Price 10s. 6d.)

The terminology of social and political theory has been largely devised during the four centuries in which the "sovereign nation state" has been accepted as the ultimate unit; but the development, especially over the last fifty years, of a "polycentric world community" (to use Mr. Cohen's expression) has so altered our working conceptions that our outlook is in many respects more mediaeval than early modern. It is important, therefore, to review the concepts we use in analysing our problems, and try to reformulate them more in accordance with the realities of our situation.

This, broadly speaking, is Mr. Cohen's theme. He gets down to essentials

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without waste of time; and his book, despite its brevity, is quite obviously the fruit of considerable reading and reflection.

His initial difficulty, of course, has been to orientate his argument from a set of assumptions which will not be open to challenge as merely arbitrary. He himself rejects the view that there is any system of rules universally accepted as right or any system of ends universally accepted as good. But he gets out of this difficulty by suggesting that—assuming wide differences of moral and valuational outlook—all of us, on reflection, agree that “conditions favourable to the *reasoned discussion of conflicting policies and codes* are fundamental to any kind of community life.” His argument is designed to make explicit what is implicit in this basic agreement, and thus provide a general criterion for social policy.

As respect for rational or logical principles is presumed in the discussion of theoretical questions, so the ground of reasoned discussion of social policy is respect for law. Anyone claiming a liberty or right for himself or his group is implying the existence of a juridical order—the mutuality of rights and duties, claims and counter-claims. But to presuppose law is to presuppose a great deal more. The difference between a moral order in a general sense and a legal order in the specific sense is that the latter requires *public* institutions for its declaration and enforcement, and to these institutions the members of the community must accord respect sufficient to ensure their functioning.

Developing this point, Mr. Cohen has some interesting things to say. (1) Law and public authority are not necessarily instrumental to the promotion of some specific general end; for the fundamental requirement of a juridical order is that it should provide the conditions in which individuals and groups can devise modes of co-existence for differing ideals and values. (2) Nevertheless, the institutional authorities needed to operate such an order cannot function without enforcing the pursuit of common ends to some extent; and therefore the policies of individuals in authority will tend to determine, as a matter of fact, the rights and duties of the constituent members. (3) It is the private demands recognized under point (1) and the public necessity of point (2) which, taken together, underlie the conception of constitutional government. But constitutional government depends, not only on devices for keeping social authorities subject to law, but also upon permitting and encouraging a “staggering of the lines of cleavage” in the community, so that the various interests of a given individual link him to different groups and do not make him identify himself exclusively with one group. (In this connection it would be interesting to consider how far a political party committed to a policy of segregation on racial—or any other—grounds can be trusted to respect principles of constitutional government if it ever attains to power.)

In the latter part of his book Mr. Cohen discusses the problems arising from the fact that, in any polycentric community, the individual is subject to a variety of at least semi-autonomous legal orders; and he takes the view that, where the demands of these different orders conflict, our paramount obligation is to that legal order which is most widely administered. Thus today, he holds, international law and institutions have a higher claim to our allegiance than rules of municipal law in conflict with international. He does not deprecate the existence of different, semi-autonomous legal orders. Indeed he seems to regard them as a feature of developed community life; and he discusses the law of the “world community” mainly on the assumption that it is of a federal character. His point is simply that, if the fundamental purpose of law is to provide conditions for peaceful discussion of divergent codes and policies, paramount obligation must be to the most widely administered system.

The last and longest chapter—on “World Citizenship”—considers in more detail some organizational issues involved in the conception of a world community.

Naturally, there are aspects of Mr. Cohen's argument open to question. Three points in particular occur to me. *Firstly*, what he has to say of “ethicism” may be a bit out of perspective. Many of those who might go under this name would not be concerned to argue that any specific code or system of ends is accepted as universally valid, but only that certain criteria are presupposed as universally valid; and Mr. Cohen's own principle of rationality, with its implication of “respect for law as such,” looks extraordinarily Kantian when one tries to work it out. *Secondly*, it may be doubted whether his distinction between the non-technical and the technical meanings of “law” is defensible in the last resort. *Thirdly*, even if one accepts his conception of the world community and of international law and institutions as unquestionably valid, it may be questioned whether, in this or in any other case, we do not simplify moral and legal issues out of all recognition by asserting that precedence always belongs to an obligation under the most widely administered juridical order.

However, I merely refer to these as controversial points, for it seems appropriate to devote most of the space at my disposal to indicating the character of Mr. Cohen's work. If plain men of our generation have somehow got the impression that moral and social philosophy consists in rushing round intellectual deserts raising linguistic dust-storms, they will, I'm sure, welcome this evidence that it sometimes does something more useful in cultivating fields profitable to humanity. Mr. Cohen is to be congratulated on his initiative in tackling a very difficult and very important subject.

W. D. LAMONT.

*Minds and Machines.* By W. SLUCKIN. (London: Penguin Books, 1954  
Pp. 223. Price 2s.)

Up to now most works in English on Cybernetics have been of a severly technical nature, plentifully besprinkled with symbols. This book, which is to be welcomed, is the first attempt in this country to give an elementary account of Cybernetics and its influence on contemporary thought. It gives a simple introduction to modern computing machines and servo-mechanisms, and describes the ingenious devices constructed to simulate human behaviour. Such topics as control and communication in machine and animal and the working of the nervous system are also discussed. Mr. Sluckin shows that Cybernetics is not without interest for the psychology of perception, learning and thinking; and in view of the number of philosophical hares it has started running, for philosophy too.

On the debit side, Mr. Sluckin might have examined in more detail such topics as the “theory of games,” which may yet prove to be of more use to psychological theory than the mechanical models described, which, as he recognizes, often owe their allure to implicit anthropomorphisms. In any case, the “model” approach is a rather crude form of analogical theorizing.

Mr. Sluckin seems to assume that disputes about “purpose” and “thinking” in machines, are chiefly concerned with the “proper use” of these expressions, and centre round the advisability of extending or restricting their meaning, which, it is said, is highly ambiguous. However, to talk of “proper use” in this context begs the question, if by this is meant giving a restricted

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behavioural definition to expressions which in ordinary speech have a complex subjective and behavioural significance. Such expressions may only appear ambiguous in the light of precise technical definitions which restrict themselves to selected features of the factual situation. Further, even if introspections are valueless for psychological science, they cannot be ignored in everyday life. The citing of philosophical attempts to give behavioural transcriptions of such data, overlooks that reductionism still remains an unproved assumption and may indeed be false.

Apart from these reservations Mr. Sluckin's book can be warmly recommended to those who wish for an intelligible introduction to this new field of enquiry.

W. MAYS.

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*Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory.* By HERBERT MARCUSE. 2nd edition. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1955. Pp. ix & 440. Price 25s.)

*Reason and Revolution* was originally published in this country in 1941, and was reviewed at length by Professor T. M. Knox in *Philosophy* for July, 1942. It is now reissued with an unchanged text and an eight-page epilogue, of no great consequence except that it serves to make it clear that the author, while remaining a Marxist, has little admiration for Soviet Russia. The greater part of the book is taken up with what appears to be a fairly orthodox Marxist interpretation of Hegelianism, an interpretation which stresses the origin (or supposed origin) of Hegel's dialectic in reflection on the antagonisms he saw below the surface of the politics of his day, and which claims that the true implications of his thought were revolutionary, despite the fact that Hegel himself in his later years became an apologist for the *status quo*. After a brief survey of the early theological writings and an interesting account, more detailed than anything else so far available in English, of Hegel's first attempts to produce a systematic philosophy during the Jena period, Mr. Marcuse passes to the *Phenomenology*, the *Science of Logic*, the *Philosophy of Right* and the *Philosophy of History*, all of which he deals with at some length. In discussing the *Phenomenology* he lays special stress, surprisingly at first sight, on the opening sections where Hegel examines the common-sense view of perception; Hegel's criticism of naive realism seems to him important since, in his view, acceptance of naive realism and political conformism go hand in hand (this connects with attacks made later in the book on "positivism," which term is used to cover both the theories of Comte and 20th-century "neo-positivism"; compare here the remarkable statement on p. 145 that "Hegel recognized an intrinsic connection between mathematical logic and a wholesale acquiescence in facts"). In the section on the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel's shrewd analysis of "civil society," which comes so near to anticipating Marxism and is so little attended to by his English critics, is properly pointed up, and emphasis is laid on certain liberal or semi-liberal aspects of his political thought, such as his belief in the rule of law. This chapter can be read as a useful corrective to the common picture of Hegel as a political absolutist convinced that the State need stop at nothing to impose its will on the individual.

The remainder of the book consists of a rather unconvincing survey of post-Hegelian thought, written to justify the thesis that philosophy had no future after Hegel was dead, its task having passed to "social theory," i.e. to Marxism.

The great merit of the work as a whole is that it succeeds in showing that Hegel had something to say and some grounds for saying it. Life is breathed

into the abstractions of the Hegelian logic, and yet it is made plausible that Hegel should have talked in terms of these abstractions. In this respect the book, for all its shortcomings, serves a real philosophical purpose. But that it has shortcomings could scarcely be denied. It is, in the first place, unduly dogmatic: there is no hint, for example, that the interpretation which the author offers of the origins and material content of Hegel's thought is a controversial one, which would be disputed by virtually all non-Marxist Hegelian scholars. Here Mr. Marcuse, like his fellow Marxist Georg Lukács, assumes too readily that because Hegel was intensely interested in politics, he must have been exclusively interested in politics, whereas everything goes to show that this was not the case. And secondly the language in which the book is written, though much simpler than Hegel's, is nonetheless not wholly satisfactory; words like "negativity" and "necessity" are used without adequate explanation, and there are many passages where the exact meaning is obscure. These defects, and the presence of a few wild *obiter dicta* like the sentence quoted above, may well deter readers accustomed to the niceties of linguistic analysis. Yet they should be encouraged to persist despite these qualms, for by doing so they can gain an understanding, if only a partial one, of a way of thinking which has been too long misunderstood and whose results have, in places, a surprising relevance to contemporary philosophy.

W. H. WALSH.

*Fact, Fiction and Forecast.* By NELSON GOODMAN. (University of London, the Athlone Press, London, 1954. Pp. 126. Price, 15s.)

This book consists of four lectures of which the first was given by Professor Goodman in New York in 1946 and the rest in London in 1953 as advanced lectures in philosophy for the University of London. Though separated by space and time in their composition and delivery, the lectures are bound by a common theme which is, roughly, that of the analysis of statements about what might be but is not and what might have been and happened but was not or did not happen. Despite the title of one lecture—The Passing of the Possible—Professor Goodman is concerned with what is physically or empirically (and not merely logically) possible but not actual.

The first lecture introduces the theme with a discussion of the now all-too-familiar problem of counter factual conditionals, those statements of the form "If this glass had been dropped it would have fallen" and "If Keats had not died young he would have composed a great epic poem." Professor Goodman criticizes previous attempts to solve the problem and concludes that a solution requires an adequate definition of "law" (which he tries to provide on p. 21) and an account of how a general statement may be accepted independently of any particular instance. Only thus may "accidental" generalizations be distinguished from laws and only laws can sustain counter-factual conditionals. The use of "law" would, even so, presumably have to be stretched to cover the counter-factual conditional about Keats. The second and third lecture consider possibility in relation to dispositions, possible entities and inductive prediction. In them Professor Goodman introduces his key term "projection" which is further discussed and applied in the final lecture. As an empiricist he is anxious that there should not be more things dreamt of in his philosophy than there are in heaven and earth (p. 39). Possible things and events are not a species of things and events. Nor is talk of them non-significant. Such talk is philosophically intelligible if understood as an "extension" of statements about what is and is manifest. Thus dispositions are not occult entities but a way of

referring to what is regularly manifested in actual situations. Or "inflammable" projects the predicate "burns" since "being inflammable" is a way of predicting in what other observable situations burning will occur and not of referring to a mysterious, imperceptible cause of burning. Statements about "possible" entities and states of affairs, are then defined as statements about dispositions (pp. 52-54). To talk of a possible blue patch where now exists green is to say that in certain circumstances (*c*) blue might be manifest here instead of green. Or place (*p*) now green is "C-blueable." Thus "blue" is projected beyond its actual range at any time but not so as to appear to characterize a non-actual object. I hope I have not misrepresented Professor Goodman but, if not, I find it hard to see what "projection" adds to the ordinary and true statements that what is inflammable will burn in certain circumstances and what is green may become blue. If more is intended by the relation of projection I do not think this is made clear. The discussion seems altogether too compressed and the lectures might well have been expanded so as to elucidate and illustrate further this important point. The actual is not one of many possible worlds, says Professor Goodman, but rather all possible worlds lie within the actual world (p. 56). This may be agreed. There are no migrants to possible worlds. Nevertheless, possibility may still be an irreducible linguistic or thought category. To say that the blueness of a green patch is a possible state of affairs is not to refer to the present blueness of the sky or to "project" any actual quality to another time or place but only to say what, it seems to me, cannot be said in simpler terms, viz. that this place which is now green may become blue. I don't think Professor Goodman intends to deny this, though his comparison on p. 52 of the "entity" *p* + *t* with the whole comprised of the body of one automobile and the chassis of another elsewhere seems a little suspicious. There is surely no need to "eliminate" possibility but only to dissolve philosophical puzzles about it. I have no space in which to comment on other topics interestingly discussed by Professor Goodman, especially those of law, hypotheses and induction. The book may be warmly recommended to all interested in these fundamental problems of knowledge, scientific theory and philosophy.

MARGARET MACDONALD.

*The Metaphysics of Logical Positivism*, By GUSTAV BERGMANN. (Longmans Green and Co., 1954. Pp. 341. Price 42s.)

Professor Bergmann will be known in this country to the readers of *Mind* and *Analysis*. He writes with considerable acumen and great enthusiasm on a number of important topics which are now being debated in America; in particular on the nature of philosophical analysis, phenomenism, mental acts, and the question of analyticity. The book is a collection of eighteen papers, most of them published during the last five years. The first six are said to give the author's present views in outline; they are followed by three earlier papers (1946-7) on the "realism phenomenism issue." The next eight papers elaborate particular themes "struck in the first nine pieces." One of these, "The Problem of Relations in Classical Psychology" (1952) seems to me to provide an excellent historical introduction to some of the main questions discussed in the book. The last paper is a semi-popular lecture on Ideology and the views of the late Professor Karl Mannheim. Many of the papers are contributions to symposia, reviews of books, or comments on particular works, and cannot be followed without reference to their contexts. The author has done nothing to avoid repetition: the main themes (especially

"What Philosophy is") occur again and again, often with the same illustrations and dicta. In his Preface, Professor Bergmann says that writing a book would have obliged him to repeat a great deal of what everyone else has said; the present collection avoids this only by repeating again and again what the author has said. It should be added that the collection is well served by an admirable index and footnotes.

The author's tone is highly controversial and he contributes criticisms of a number of important writers, American and English, including Carnap (*Der logische Aufbau der Welt*, 1928); Hempel ("The Concept of Cognitive Significance," 1951); Quine ("Two Dogmas of Empiricism," 1951); Nelson Goodman (*The Structure of Appearance*, 1951); Russell (on particulars, from *Inquiry into Meaning and Truth*, 1940); Ayer (Inaugural Lecture, 1947); and Black—still regarded as British—"The Identity of Indiscernibles," 1953).

Mr. Bergmann is much occupied with "the grand strategy of positivist analysis," and does his best to sort out the various authors he discusses into the different wings of the positivist movement. From his third paper, "Logical Positivism, Language, and Reconstruction of Metaphysics" (1953), I was able to draw up notes rather like those made by Julius Caesar on the dispositions of Pompey's forces at Pharsalus—always remembering that the quarrels between the different commands are at least as important as the offensive against the non-positivists. I tentatively suggest the following:

F. Waismann		N. Goodman (?)			
J. Wisdom (?)		A. J. Ayer (?)	W. V. Quine		
J. Austin (?)	G. Ryle	G. Bergmann	R. Carnap		
CASUITISTS	CONVENTIONALISTS	RECONSTRUCTIONISTS	FORMALISTS		
<hr/>			NEO-		
<hr/>			PRAGMATISTS		
ANALYSTS OF USAGE		IDEAL LINGUISTS			
OR FUTILITARIANS					
"Little Bloomsbury"					
<hr/>					
POSITIVISTS					

The names of commanding officers are those indicated or strongly hinted at in the book. Mr. Bergmann makes the interesting suggestion that the main divisions date from 1932 or shortly afterwards. I forbear to comment on the scheme except to say that since the publication of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, his close connection with the two left wings is now clear to everybody (cf. p. 51).

Philosophy begins (on Mr. Bergmann's view) with highly paradoxical questions, and with such contentions as "that we never really see bodies"—"absurd" contentions which can hardly be accepted at their face value. The philosopher proceeds to construct a sketch of an ideal language of a purely formal type. This calculus is then interpreted into ordinary language; but in this interpretation the characteristically puzzling statements which a philosopher makes in his study do not occur except in quotation marks. The next stage is the discussion of this interpretation (again in ordinary language) which serves to show why it is that our interpretation excludes the paradoxes. This discussion is "the last and crowning phase," "the heart of the philosophical enterprise," "the Moorean discourse": and is successful in so far as it dissolves all philosophical puzzles "simultaneously." That is to say, the same ideal language is to be shown to serve for all puzzles. This may take a lifetime to demonstrate, but the point is that it is not sufficient to construct

different formal systems to deal with different problems. No problem is solved unless all are solved (pp. 115-6). That a certain calculus does the trick is a matter of *fact*. Not all philosophy is verbal. We do not solve problems by hypothesis, "posit," or choice or convention. But the calculus is only a sketch; it cannot be a complete set of blueprints; and there is no suggestion that we ought now to proceed to talk in the language which results from our interpretation. "Syntactical positivism proposes to clarify the language we speak but do not fully understand by one which we understand but cannot speak" (238). *Cannot speak*, if only because it can never be a complete language. Mr. Bergmann illustrates his view of philosophical analysis by reference to the problem of existence. "Do centaurs exist?" is a problem which Russell solved by the construction of the formal system of *Principia Mathematica*. We are able to interpret the signs ( $\exists x$ ) . Px . Qx as "There is something which both has the body of a horse and the head and shoulders of a man." This proposition is no doubt false: the description has no application and we see that we can answer the original question without making an *ontological* statement of existence. So the theory of descriptions solves one of the great "existence-questions." Nevertheless this construction is of philosophical importance only because it also solves (or can be amplified to solve) other problems, for instance, the existence of classes. Mr. Bergmann's "ideal language" is a phenomenalist one. Its logical machinery consists of "the non-controversial parts of P.M.;" its logically proper names stand for such things as sense-data and elementary feelings and its set of undefined predicates are appropriate to these particulars. Only these particulars have (*ontological*) existence: "chairs" and "tables" occur only as descriptive phrases defined in terms of sensory predicates. We can indeed say that "There are chairs" (or even that "chairs exist"); but this is not a philosophical statement. The principle that all defined predicates are defined in terms of characters that are immediately observable is known as the Principle of Acquaintance. Mr. Bergmann regards it as a fundamental part of the philosophical discourse about the ideal language (265). To this traditional phenomenalist language, two important additions are made. (1) Provision is made for a direct description of "mental acts"; (2) an undefined value-predicate is introduced.

Mr. Bergmann is concerned to defend first his view as to what philosophy is—the "ideal language" thesis; and secondly his conclusions as to the particular nature of the ideal language.

Mr. Bergmann argues that philosophy is not any kind of scientific or grammatical study of language; nor is it simply formal semantics which has some philosophical interest but is not philosophy. "Philosophical questions require philosophical answers" (133). Mr. Bergmann dismisses the "grammatical" study of ordinary language ("Casuism") as a probing and pruning of the idiom, and a refusal to recognize the existence of philosophical *problems*. He agrees with Carnap that philosophy is essentially *formal* and proceeds by the setting up of a purely formal system. But he holds that this system is only a tool: it is not *itself* the answer to any problem—except a purely logical one. As far as I can understand Mr. Bergmann's criticisms of Carnap, they amount to the charge that he holds the following views:

- (1) The philosopher aims to set up a *complete* formal calculus for ordinary propositions—complete for its own sake, or in order to comply with requirements of purely scientific systems. ("Cutting butter with a razor.")
- (2) Carnap defines a notion of "L-true" which is supposed to be applicable to all analytic statements but in fact (a) it presupposes the meaning of

"analytic" and (b) it is used to cover statements which are not real analytic.

(3) Philosophical questions (e.g. Do numbers exist?) are to be answered solely by reference to the calculus—does it include numerals? (64). This makes them purely verbal questions.

(4) It is admitted by Carnap (1950) that there are questions external to the framework of his system—questions of its comprehensiveness and its usefulness in classifying traditional philosophical questions. But he still despises such questions.

Mr. Bergmann agrees with Quine ("Two Dogmas of Empiricism," 1951) holding that we cannot in fact make detailed analyses of physical object statements into phenomenalistic language, but denies that this constitutes an objection to the linguistic thesis of phenomenism. Some meanings are "holistic" and resist complete formalization: but the philosopher does not wish to produce a complete language. Mr. Bergmann is utterly opposed to Quine's view that it is up to us to "posit" the existence of certain kinds of entity. This (he says) is to attempt to answer in the ideal language one of the very questions it was designed to avoid (102). Bergmann also defends the distinction between analytic and synthetic propositions (the first dogma attacked by Quine) by an argument which purports to show that unless we are in a position to make this distinction we cannot distinguish logical signs from descriptive signs.

So much for Mr. Bergmann's defence of his view of the nature of philosophical language-construction. In defending his view of the particular character of the ideal language, he has first to oppose physicalism—"the silliest of all philosophical theses." This is done in a paper on "Bodies, Mind and Acts" (not previously published). "That Jones has a green sense-datum is not a piece of philosophical moonshine but a commonsensical thing to say. And it may be said by Jones himself or by Smith. When Smith says it he does not merely mean that Jones's body is uttering certain words or behaving in a certain way. He does mean this but he also means that "There is something green" in the same sense as is implied by Smith's own remark "This is green." In Jones's case, Smith infers that there is something green with the help of a factual general proposition or law: but he does not make any such inference when he himself says "This is green." And Mr. Bergmann contends that physicalism is unable, by any kind of "definitional reconstruction" to make clear the difference between Smith's statement about Jones and Smith's statement about himself. The ideal language, therefore, cannot be a physical one.

Mr. Bergmann does not do much to justify his addition of undefined value predicates. These turn out to be descriptive of peculiar affective tones always (somehow) conjoined with predicates describing observable properties of certain configurations of them (243 f.). His addition of a predicate of knowing (corresponding to a mental act) is defended again and again but the doctrine is very obscure. We are asked to introduce into the ideal language the vocabulary necessary to distinguish between "This is green" and "I know that this is green." But the second does not (in Mr. Bergmann's view) describe the relation of a known content to a knowing self: for Hume has shown that there is no knowing self. What is described, is a relation between a content and "a knowing" which makes the knowing a knowing that this is green and not that anything else is the case. Now we are asked whether "knowing" is to be introduced "directly" or not. This (it is said) is not a question about the

relation of the states of affairs *This is green* and *It is known that this is green*: rather it is a question of the role played in the ideal language by these two "texts" (220). If we introduce knowing "directly" we commit ourselves to a new syntactical category—that of dependent clauses: and a dependent clause is combined with its major clause ("It is known") in a nonextensional manner. Mr. Bergmann says: "there is no *a priori* reason why one should not thus enrich the syntax of the ideal language": and yet he goes on to say that to do so is to take the road to absurdity. Mr. Bergmann believes there is another way out: "to construe 'knowing' (in the ideal language) as a nonrelational predicate and the name of what is known as a particular" (151). Does this mean that "*I know that this is green*" is a conjunction: "*This is green and is known*"? In another place, and speaking metaphorically, the author says that unless we introduce "mental acts," the positivist's universe remains flat, with subject and object squeezed into one plane" (56). Can anything be flatter than a conjunction? Mr. Bergmann admits in his Preface that the doctrine "has bothered some of his friends." I would number myself amongst them.

KARL BRITTON.

*The Social Self.* By PAUL E. PFUETZE. (New York, Bookman Associates. 1954. Pp. 392. Price \$4.50.)

Professor Pfuetze here compares and contrasts the theories of human personality developed by the late Professor G. H. Mead and by Dr. Martin Buber. These two thinkers differ widely in their general outlook and mode of approach, but both perform the feat of discarding a great deal of rubbish, pseudo-scientific rubbish on the one hand, and pseudo-philosophical on the other. They both emphasize as their central point that what makes a man fully human, a person, conscious of himself as such, is that he is a *socius*, not just an individual; in short the pure individual is a fabulous monster. Mead, whose outlook is naturalistic and empirical, discards the misleading physical analogies so popular in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In this his pragmatist philosophy helps him, even if it hinders him in other ways. Dr. Buber, whose outlook is explicitly theistic in the Hebrew tradition, to whom we owe the vital distinction between *I-it* and *I-Thou* relations, can be called an Existentialist. He differs from most of them, however, in the sobriety and intelligibility of his language. Thus far their work can be summed up, in Professor Pfuetze's words, "Mead provides a scientific *floor* and Buber a metaphysical *ceiling* for man's abode."

There is a wide space between floor and ceiling, where we get little help from Mead or Buber or our present author. Granted that men only become human in their relations with their fellows, yet in those very same relations they frequently become in-human or sub-human and very occasionally super-human. Every one of us is a *socius*, yet there is no universal society; possibly there ought to be, but if so it will not be like any existing society. There exist and always have existed a hotch-potch of larger and smaller, interweaving and interfering, societies with conflicting claims producing conflicting loyalties. There is also the paradox rightly emphasized (even if a bit over-emphasized) by Dr. R. Niebuhr in his book *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, that men in their group relationships and specially in the larger, more powerful kinds of group operate collectively at a lower level than the very same men do individually in small-scale relationships. Buber has one suggestion which is some small help with this last problem, namely that the

larger group relationships belong more to the realm of *I-it* than to that of *I-Thou*. For the rest he has to be content with the apocalyptic hope of the Hebrew Prophets. Mead is worse off; he relies on the secularized nineteenth century evolutionary version of the apocalyptic hope, the assumption that the future must be better than the past, that since societies get bigger, they do almost automatically, they get better, quite automatically.

This is a useful book for anybody interested in the philosophical problem of human personality; lengthy and pedestrian in exposition, but always careful and never obscure. Professor Pfuetze supplies bibliographies of the two writers he discusses.

A. D. RITCHIE

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*Aristotle. Parva Naturalia. A revised text with introduction and commentary by SIR DAVID ROSS. (Oxford, Clarendon Press 1955. Pp. xi + 332. Price £2.)*

The so-called *Parva Naturalia* of Aristotle is a collection of short treatises on the physical aspects of sensation and the sensible, memory and recollection, sleep, dreams, oneiromancy, longevity, youth and old age, and death, and breathing. Although for a full appreciation of his scientific achievement a reading of his more detailed zoological works is essential, the balance of his mind between observation and theory is well illustrated here. Since Darwin said that Linnaeus and Cuvier were schoolboys to him, it must be so. Yet for all his wealth of acute observation he confused phosphorescence with the glimmering reflection from any polished object in the dark (*De sensu* 437b), he was apparently unaware of any connection between tadpoles and frogs (Ross p. 324), and we know from elsewhere that he believed the caterpillar, not the egg, to be the earliest stage of a butterfly's existence. The wording of the sentence in *De respiratione* (478a34) is curious and perhaps significant. It may be rendered: "To discover the situation of the heart relative to the lung, one must rely for visual evidence on dissection, but for precision on the written treatises." (He refers to his own *Historia Animalium*.) A commentary on the works which aimed primarily at a fuller explanation and appreciation of Aristotle's methods and merits as a biologist—calling perhaps for collaboration—would still be welcome. He saw all life as ultimately dependent on the maintenance of heat in the central organ, i.e. the heart. Food acts as fuel for this heat, and the function of breathing is to supply sufficient cooling to prevent it from burning out too quickly. This theory and the location of the "common sensorium" in the heart may have been erroneous, but they indicate a scientific and therefore fruitful, approach. Our sense of perspective is aided here by Sherrington, who wrote that Aristotle, by his description of mind, made to the theme perhaps the greatest contribution not only of antiquity but of our own era so far as the Renaissance. "His faulty 'localization' was soon corrected and . . . his conception of a 'common sensorium' was fundamental and fertile during more than eighteen centuries." Sherrington shows also that Aristotle had, in his time, good reasons for neglecting the claims of the brain in this connection. His account of prophetic dreams in *De Divinatione per Somnum* is sober and sceptical, denying their divine origin and suggesting natural causes, and it is hard to believe that the man who set aside so widespread, tenacious and respectable a belief accepted as fact the superstition that when a malicious woman looks in a mirror its surface takes on a reddish tinge which

<sup>1</sup> *Man on his Nature* (1940), p. 239 (Pelican ed. 1955, 197.)

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may be difficult to remove. (*De insomn.* 459b27ff.) In spite of Ross and Lulofs, Biehl was surely right to suspect the authenticity of this passage.

There existed in English no complete edition of the collection with introduction and commentary, though for *De sensu* and *De memoria* the work of G. R. T. Ross (1906) is still valuable, as are the texts of *De insomniis* and *De div. per somn.*, with English introduction, by the Dutch scholar Dr. Lulofs (1947). Sir David Ross has now provided, in the familiar red binding of his *Metaphysics*, *Physics* and *Analytics*, a text of the whole with bibliography, full introduction, commentary and indexes. The notes are brief, and biological comment, for which the editor pronounces himself unqualified, is not their primary intention; but their brevity is offset by the very full summaries, amounting almost to translations, which precede each chapter.

In the introduction Ross deals with the question of the place of these treatises in the development of Aristotle's ideas on psychology and related studies. F. Nuyens<sup>1</sup> distinguished three stages. (1) In the early dialogues, Aristotle adopted the Platonic view that the human soul is alien to the body and immortal, only living its true and natural life after death or before birth. (2) In the biological works of his middle period he regards soul as essentially the same in all living things, located in a particular organ of the body, namely the heart ("or in bloodless animals the part analogous to it"). (3) Finally comes the doctrine of *De anima* that soul and body are not two substances, but two aspects of a unity, the living body, of which the body itself is the matter and soul the 'form' or entelechy, the principle of its structure or organization. As such, it can no longer be localized in any particular organ. Of the *Parva Nat.* Nuyens assigned *De juventute etc.* (including *De resp.*) to the second stage, the remainder except *De long. vit.* to the third, and described *De long. vit.* as already very near the third. Ross, in spite of certain resemblances in detail between *De sensu* and *De mem.* on the one hand and *De anima* on the other, considers that all the treatises of the *Parva Nat.* share the fundamental outlook of the biological period. (He argues against Lulofs' division of *De somno* and *De insomn.* into an earlier and a later part.) His reason, which seems decisive, is that all alike teach the two-substance view of body and soul and localize the latter in the heart. The only difficulty lies in the repeated references in the *Parva Nat.* to  $\tau\alpha \pi\epsilon\rho \psi\chi\eta\varsigma$ . Ross would explain these as later additions, an explanation which he considers "less drastic" than the hypothesis that they refer to an earlier version of *De anima* written before Aristotle had adopted the theory of the soul as entelechy. Yet (1) the references are numerous and by no means all to be easily torn from their context,<sup>2</sup> (2) Ross says that *De juv.* 467b12 refers to *De an.* 2.414a19, but this seems impossible, for it runs: "Since I have written elsewhere on the soul, and it is clear that its essence is not corporeal, but that nevertheless it exists in a particular part of the body . . ." and goes on to argue that this part must be the heart. The "corresponding" sentence of *De an.* says only that the soul must exist "in the body," and it belongs to a passage proving the soul to be the body's entelechy—a theory with which, as Ross himself has shown, its location in a particular organ is inconsistent. The significance of the references in the *Parva Nat.* to "the work on the soul" needs further study.

In establishing the text the editor has behind him a lifetime of familiarity with his author. He does not lightly introduce conjectures of his own, and when he does it is either to secure an improvement in the sense or to make the Greek conform more closely to what he knows to be Aristotle's idiosyncrasies of style.

<sup>1</sup> *L'Evolution de la psychologie d'Aristote* (1948).

<sup>2</sup> Cf., e.g., the opening words of *De sensu* and 436b 8–10. Ross on p. 17 lists 12 of these references, but there are in fact 15. Add *De mem.* 449b30, *Somn.* 455a8, *Insomn.* 459a15.

These ends he sometimes attains by merely changing the traditional punctuation. The account of the manuscripts in the last section of the introduction is little too condensed to be easily followed, and it is not clear in what sense a ms. of "saec.xiii-xiv" (L) can be the ancestor of one of "saec.xii-xiii" (X), and another of "saec.xiii-xiv" (W) the ancestor of one of "saec.xi" (U). (See pp. 67 and 61. But perhaps in the second case "xi" is a misprint. Lulofs at least assigns U to the thirteenth century.

W. K. C. GUTHRIE.

*The Illusion of the Epoch. Marxism-Leninism as a Philosophical Creed.* By H. B. Acton. (Cohen and West, Ltd.; 1955. Pp. viii + 278. Price 18s.)

The concluding chapter of this work takes the form of a dialogue between "a reader" and "the author." The former's final request is for a summary in a phrase or two of the latter's criticisms of Marxism. The reply runs, "let me be briefer still and say that Marxism is a philosophical farrago" (271). Professor Acton's main criticism of Marxism (that is to say, of Marxism as developed by Lenin and Stalin) is that it is "a mixture of two philosophies which cannot consistently go along together, positivism on the one hand and Hegelianism on the other" (251). This seems to me to be perfectly true. It is doubtless sometimes the case, as the author observes, that Marxists, when using Hegelian terminology, "are not thinking Hegelian thoughts," but in the process of setting Hegelianism on its feet, as they have claimed to do, they transpose into a materialist setting a concept of the movement of history towards an inevitable goal which has no sense apart from an "idealist" philosophy. Again, logical words are used in a context where their applicability is questionable. When Engels says, for instance, that there are contradictions in nature he "has taken an argument from Hegel's *speculative* philosophy, and used it as if it could be comfortably housed in the Marxist *anti-speculative* philosophy" (98). To the unreflective mind Marxism may give the impression of being a massive coherent system; but it comprises within itself incompatible elements. The Marxists may commend "dialectical thinking;" but they presumably do not wish to commend a self-contradictory system of philosophy. It is, therefore, up to them to show that the system does not contain incompatible elements rather than to take refuge in panegyrics of dialectical thinking.

The validity of this general line of criticism tends, I think, to be confirmed by the emergence in the history of Marxism of divergent lines of interpretation right-wing and left-wing or idealist and mechanistic. That these divergent lines have been held in check has not been due to any fundamental coherence in the system, but rather to the connection between Marxism and an extra-philosophical factor. As the system has been treated as an essential weapon in the hands of a closely-knit social-political Party, it has been possible to lay down a philosophical orthodoxy and to maintain it by varying forms of coercion. I see no cogent reason for supposing that, were it not for its alliance with a highly-organized social-political movement, the latent tensions within the Marxist system would not have manifested themselves long ago in an unmistakable form.

Professor Acton devotes the first part of this book to dialectical materialism which he considers in two chapters, entitled respectively "Marxist Realism" and "Marxist Naturalism." The first chapter contains an interesting discussion of the relations between Marxism and phenomenism. In *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* Lenin argued that phenomenism is inseparable from idealism, and that it therefore favours a religious outlook, whatever phenomenism

may say. Professor Acton takes the "therefore" to indicate both factual and logical connection, and he challenges Lenin's statement in both senses. He argues that though phenomenism appears to be committed to some sort of idealism it "consigns both God and material substances to a common and irrelevant grave" (23). Materialism, however, if it asserts the reality of material substances beyond sense-experience," excludes phenomenism but only at the expense of making God appear a possibility" (*ibid.*) The author is obviously speaking of full-blown modern phenomenism, and his interpretation of its nature and consequences may be correct. But he later admits that though the sort of phenomenism which Lenin was criticizing appears to render meaningless the concept of a transcendent God, it "appears also to require there to be some Observer (not necessarily God, but perhaps merely a Sensitive Gas) to make sense of the conception of the world that existed before the coming of animal or human life" (35). However, Lenin did not, of course, confine himself to arguing that phenomenism is indissolubly connected with "idealism"; he also maintained that it is not in fact true. And, in the author's opinion, he discerned certain essential weaknesses in this philosophy, though he did not examine them with sufficient patience and fullness. At the same time Lenin seems to have committed himself to the copy-theory of perception. And Professor Acton argues that "once Marxists accept the view that perception is by means of images, then there is nothing to distinguish their views from phenomenism except the wish that it were not" (38). In other words, Engels and Lenin saw that a realist account of perception was required for establishing a materialist philosophy; and some of Lenin's criticisms of phenomenism are to the point. Yet the account of perception which is actually given by Engels and Lenin can scarcely be reconciled with a realist materialism, opposed to phenomenism.

In his chapter on Marxist naturalism the author considers, among other matters, the theory of the transformation of quantity into quality. He analyses with care the different meanings of this transformation which are implied by the examples selected by Hegel and discusses the use made of these ideas by the Marxists. One important point which he makes is that they wish to emphasize two things, the occurrence of qualitative leaps in nature and the possibility of a science of society which will allow the making of social predictions. "These two views, however, do not easily go together" (89). The Marxists can give plausibility to their theory only by leaving a notion such as "novelty" insufficiently clarified.

The second part of the book is entitled "Scientific Socialism" and comprises chapters on historical materialism and on Marxist ethics. After outlining the materialist conception of history Professor Acton submits it to detailed and trenchant criticism. To some intelligent people it has appeared to be obviously true. But "it has seemed obviously true because of the tautologies concealed in the language in which the theory is formulated" (167-8). To take an example. If in a fishing society which uses canoes someone were to invent a large sailing vessel, the use of the latter would necessarily involve a new division of labour, new jobs. If we care to speak of the new set-up as a new productive relationship, it is true to say that the invention of a new productive force must result in new productive relationships. But "the 'must' indicates a tautology, for new machines are not merely differently constructed machines but machines that have to be worked in new ways" (162). The term "productive relationship" can, however, be used, and is used by the Marxists, to cover relationships which are wider than those actually involved in operating a tool or machine but which are required, in some form or other, if the tool or machine is to be used at all. And it is the author's contention that no good reason is provided for

saying that once new productive forces have been set in motion a particular given form of productive relationships, in the wider sense of the term, must eventually result. What has happened is that Marxists have left the term "productive relationship" conveniently vague and that they have transferred the necessity of the relation between productive forces and productive relationships in the narrow sense to the relation between productive forces and productive relationships in the wider sense. The author does not intend to condemn tautologies. But we have to beware of transferring the certain attaching to tautologies to propositions which are not tautologies; and this, is the author's opinion, is what has occurred in the case of the materialist conception of history. He also points out, of course, some of the obscurities confusions and ambiguities to be found in the theory of historical epochs and in the Marxist account of the ideological superstructure.

In the chapter on Marxist ethics Professor Acton illustrates the element of relativism in Marxist ethical theory. Lenin, for instance, expressly declared that "we do not believe in an eternal morality, and we expose all the fables about morality." But though relativist arguments are employed to confound opponents of Marxism, the latter's supporters do not hesitate to speak of moral progress and of a "truly human" morality. Both Engels and Lenin spoke in this way. The Marxists may think that he is speaking in purely scientific terms, but he "can derive moral precepts from his social science only to the extent that they already form, because of the vocabulary used, a concealed and unacknowledged part of it" (190). The author further argues that the Marxists' account of the society of the future is "Utopian" in the very sense in which they criticized people such as Saint-Simon, Fourier and Owen for being Utopians. To be sure, the Marxists, who are good at having things both ways, refuse to make their picture more definite on the ground that precision of this sort is Utopian and romantic fantasy. "But if they are right in this last contention, then surely they are wrong in claiming that their view differs from Utopianism in being predictive in any important sense. Very vague predictions are of even less practical value than are detailed wishes" (249).

It will be seen from this account of Professor Acton's book that it is a sustained adverse criticism of Marxism. He does not, of course, deny that the Marxists say things which are true. But he would maintain, I think, that the truths which are to be found in the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Company have no necessary connection with dialectical materialism, with what belongs specifically to Marxism-Leninism as a philosophical creed. It is possible that the Marxist can provide a satisfactory answer to this or that detailed objection advanced by the author. But the general line of criticism seems to me to be unassailable. A Marxist would doubtless say that the author has failed to understand Marxism. He might even claim that a man can really understand Marxism only if he commits himself to it. But this would be a strange position to adopt. It is true to say that a man cannot really understand aesthetic experience or religious experience unless he has enjoyed it, if by "really understand" we mean having the experience in question. For it is tautological to say that we cannot have an experience without having it. But Marxism is a philosophy; indeed, according to the Marxists, it is the one and only scientific philosophy. And before we can decide about its truth and commit ourselves to it if we decide that it is true, we must first understand what it is. And in this clear and careful analysis of Marxism Professor Acton reveals the presence of heterogeneous and incompatible elements and thus successfully discredits the claim of this philosophy to be the final scientific truth about the world and human society.

There is, I think, no likelihood of Marxism being accepted by philosophers

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in general unless circumstances arose in which it could be imposed by force, circumstances, that is to say, in which nonconformist philosophers were silenced. But in view of the truisms which it exploits and because of certain other factors dialectical materialism is capable of winning for itself among those who are not trained to philosophical analysis a disproportionate respect. Hence, even if British and American philosophers do not, in the vast majority of cases, stand in need of any conversion in this respect, Professor Acton's work can be of very great use in helping to expose an illusion. He does this very largely by what may perhaps be called linguistic analysis, but not, be it added, by committing himself to a particular philosophical system and then criticizing Marxism in so far as it runs counter to that system or point of view. This freedom from party-spirit adds, I think, to the value of the book, even though Marxists may find in it additional ground for indignation or scorn.

FREDERICK C. COPLESTON, S.J.

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*Science versus Idealism: in Defence of Philosophy against Positivism and Pragmatism.* By MAURICE CORNFORTH. (London: Lawrence and Wishart Ltd. 1955. Pp. 463. Price 27s. 6d.)

This book will undoubtedly become the standard textbook in English for the criticism of Western philosophy from the standpoint of dialectical materialism; but it is only briefly noted here, because it combines (and replaces) two earlier books, *Science versus Idealism* (1946) and *In Defence of Philosophy* (1950) each of which has already been fully reviewed in PHILOSOPHY (vol. xxiii, p. 280, and vol. xxvii, p. 178). The union is a happy one, resulting in a well-integrated historical and critical study of the "modern analytic movement." I have found little to justify the claim of "very extensive changes" in the author's earlier work. The original chapter on "The Philosophy of Wittgenstein" (an acute and penetrating analysis of the *Tractatus*) has been altered only by the addition of a short section on the *Investigations* (which is rather complacently dismissed as a "remarkable example of the complete disintegration of a philosophy"). Of the criticisms to which Cornforth acknowledges his indebtedness, it is significant that almost all are by Marxist writers. It is a pity that he has merely ignored the criticism of reviewers (in PHILOSOPHY, *Mind*, etc.) whose philosophy he dislikes.

BERNARD MAYO.

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*Science and Religion: A Changing Relationship.* The Rede Lecture for 1954 by C. A. COULSON. (Cambridge University Press. Pp. 36. Price 2s. 6d.)

In this lecture Professor Coulson provides many new and lively impressions of the changing relations of science and religion, but it would have been helpful if he had not left it so much to the reader to read between the lines of some of his observations. The main theme of the lecture is however plain. It is that if we are to understand the relations of science and religion aright, we must have regard to the processes of science as a whole, including the total experience of the scientist. There can thus be no sharp division into secular and religious phenomena, and we must not look for God in the gaps of our scientific knowledge. The failures of science are a challenge to better science, and "if we ask a question about nature in purely scientific terms we shall only be right to expect scientific answers." On the other hand science is not to be detached from the experience of persons, for the laws of nature "are them-

selves human constructs," even "though nature existed before ever man was. Man and nature are "intermingled." One consequence of this is that we must guard against the increasingly abstract character of science and the lack of immediacy in contacts with nature, there being cases where we actually "screen ourselves off from what is happening by thick layers of concrete." The sense of reverence and "haunting presence" is to be restored, we must make experiences, rather than patterns constructed out of them, primary. But if we are able to encounter God in this way we may then find in science a way of enlarging "our concept of God's activity in the world," and by viewing nature thus in the light of "a fully incarnational religion" we shall find further extensions of our total religious experience. Our confidence in reason will be deepened, and we shall regard the vastness of nature and man's relative insignificance within it, notwithstanding that it is also his own construction as an indication of the "otherness" of nature by which "the order of Nature has a value, independent of man," as "something in which God could rejoice for its own sake." We shall likewise find the tensions of spiritual experience reflected in the contrasts of nature, tragic and joyous, beautiful and red tooth and claw, "the X-ray tearing the electrons out of an atom as it reveals its structure and symmetry." We thus arrive at a "sacramental view of nature) in which we see heaven mingling with earth." Only this incarnation "involvement of God within his own handiwork can do justice to its relation to ourselves."

This thesis, especially when summed up in the reference to an "assumption of a spiritual wholeness about life" and "the inter-relatedness of all things within the role of a person," has obvious affinities with idealistic philosophy, and it would have been helpful if Coulson, since he claims to be describing recent changes of attitude, could have indicated explicitly how he stands in relation to thinkers like Bosanquet and other idealists who spoke, in the same vein, of a sacramental universe and of every bush being "afire with God." Would Coulson wish to amend the substance of their teaching? If not, how does he meet the usual objections to their views? I believe he does wish to say something different from the idealists, but it is here that his view is most elusive and, for that reason, difficult to criticize. The insistence on the primacy of experiences seems to me very sound, but can the force of this for religious thought be appraised without greater stress on the distinctiveness of certain sorts of experiences? How otherwise can we avoid reducing religious insight to a mere sense of the general inter-relatedness of things? Idealism has always tended to blur essential distinctions; what course will Coulson shape to avoid that and retain the distinctiveness of particular occurrences and experience which we have been taught recently especially to associate with "a fully incarnational religion"? These are some of the questions prompted by this stimulating lecture, and it is much to be hoped that Professor Coulson himself will find an early opportunity to throw further light upon them.

H. D. LEWIS.

*Experimental Psychology*: A series of Broadcast Talks. Edited by B. A. Farrell  
(Basil Blackwell, 1955. Pp. xi + 66. Price 7s. 6d.)

It is still not uncommon to meet well educated persons who are genuinely puzzled by allusions to psychological experiments and psychological laboratories. "I can't imagine," they exclaim, "how you can make experiments in psychology." Often their bewilderment springs from an acquaintance with psychology derived from non-experimental fields, e.g. philosophical treatises

## NEW BOOKS

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or psychoanalytic writings. To those so puzzled this little book can suitably be presented. It illustrates briefly and clearly some of the ways in which psychologists study their subject by experimental methods. The substance of the work consists of the scripts of a series of Broadcast talks on recent research. A. J. Watson (Lecturer in Psychology at Cambridge) discusses Perception. Harry Kay (Lecturer in Experimental Psychology at Oxford) selects certain aspects of Adult Learning and Remembering. J. A. Deutsch (Lecturer in General Psychology at Oxford) considers what sort of machine an organism must be in order to account for the facts of "motivation." B. A. Farrell (Wilde Reader in Mental Philosophy at Oxford), who also edits the volume, examines the bearings of some recent empirical studies on "Some Hypotheses of Psycho-analysis." Michael Argyle (Lecturer in Social Psychology at Oxford) reviews some experimental and other empirical studies of Social Behaviour. R. C. Oldfield (Professor of Psychology at Reading) concludes by a discussion of "The Prospects of Experimental Psychology."

The contributions are at a uniformly high level, but being brief "talks" are inevitably selective, rather scrappy, and topical. Too much was perhaps attempted in the way of indicating the relevance of the selected studies to large theoretical issues. It might have been better if in each field a single experiment had been selected and the bearing of its results on one crucial issue considered in more details. Better still would have been to have taken the opportunity of publication to expand the volume into a work of more permanent value. However, as it stands it serves its restricted purpose well and gives members of the Third Programme public who missed the broadcasts a very good idea of the sort of things that experimental psychologists are interested in today. For philosophers its interest derives from the preoccupation of psychologists with questions of methodology rather than of content.

C. A. MACE.

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*Language in Culture: Conference on the inter-relations of Language and other aspects of Culture.* Edited by Harry Hoijer. (University of Chicago Press. 1954.)

From the philosopher's point of view this is an interesting but unsatisfactory book. It is the record—papers and discussions—of a conference of linguists, anthropologists, and philosophers, the primary aim of which was to examine certain of the views of Benjamin Whorf. Whorf, an extremely lively and persuasive writer, had become pre-occupied, chiefly as a result of researches among the Hopi Indians, with the idea that any language in some sense embodies and imposes upon its speakers a "metaphysic," a "thought-world," a special picture of the universe, even (as he sometimes said) a special "logic"; and that some languages, Hopi for instance, differ very widely in this respect from what he called Standard Average European. Whorf's claims for the importance of this idea were pitched very high, and his own applications of it, if speculative, were undeniably interesting. His writings raised even the problem whether *any* experience could be regarded by him as unconditioned linguistically, as capable of being strictly common to all human beings. In Kantian terms, he appeared to emphasize Form to the almost total exclusion of Matter, and to regard Form as specifiable only with reference to one particular language at a time. His idea has thus been charged with involving an extreme, almost hopeless, "linguistic relativism." Two questions, however, arise with some urgency: what exactly was this idea that he thought so important? and, how far was he right?

The papers in the present volume vary widely in their relevance to the questions, and also seem—to the inexpert eye—to vary greatly in merit. There is throughout a disconcerting tendency to pass rapidly from dicta of enormous generality to minute observations on the quirks of particular language, and a good deal of space is devoted, possibly usefully, to very general adulation of programmes of research, of "projects" and methodology. When the so-called "Whorfian hypothesis" is squarely approached the attitude for the most part sceptical. The first paper in particular, by Joseph Greenberg, discusses most admirably the dangers involved in making quick inference from language to life. For example: Whorf had drawn the conclusion that Hopi's conception of time was peculiar, that their way of counting days embodied the idea, not of items succeeding each other, but of the same item regularly re-appearing; Greenberg points out that in this respect French differs from English very much as Hopi does, that Whorf's reasoning would lead for instance to the conclusion that successive kings of the same name as regarded by French speakers, though not by English, as re-incarnations of single man. The good point is also made that metaphysics, at least as the word has been commonly understood, tends to derive, in so far as it derives from language at all, not directly from language, but from doctrines or prejudices, philosophical or grammatical, *about* language. Surprisingly, it is emphasized that speakers of a common language do not all always agree, & Whorf *prima facie* implies that they should, on metaphysical doctrines. However, it becomes in the end sufficiently clear that, if languages do indeed incorporate their own metaphysics, it can only be in some queer sense "metaphysics" that this is true.

It is persuasively argued elsewhere that "the most precisely definable differences between languages are also the most trivial from the Whorfian point of view." Very clear linguistic differences can often be explained in terms of humdrum divergences of background, history, or predominant interest, with no occasion for introducing any metaphysics at all. It is not difficult to understand why Arabs should be verbally ill-equipped to gossip about the weather, or Eskimos amply provided with words for different kinds of snow. Unfortunately, in proportion as the conclusions seem to be of greater significance, the basis for them becomes more precarious and ill-defined.

But this volume's curious blend of scepticism and grandiloquence does not destroy, nor surely should it destroy, the feeling that Whorf was concerned, however confusedly, with questions of serious interest and importance. There is perhaps detectible in these pages a certain atmosphere of conservative comment upon a risky radical, and this to my mind does Whorf no discredit.

It is a pity that no more serious attempt is here made to determine exactly what sort of difference a difference of "thought-world" would be, and what sort of dissimilarity between languages might be regarded as connected, and in what way, with differences of that sort; for until some such attempt is made Whorf's questions though engaging are too vague for profitable discussion. Disappointingly little is here done towards either clarifying or answering them. But there is certainly scope for all the projects and programmes here suggested, and philosophers would do well to keep an eye on any results that may be forthcoming. It is in any case stimulating to read a discussion of language well supported by ample and exotic empirical data. Incidentally, why should not enquiries of this sort be undertaken not only into Hopi, or Yokuts, or Zuni, or Shawnee, but into Latin and Greek? The lack of native speakers would be a serious obstacle, but on the other hand the literatures available are vastly more extensive.

G. J. WARNOCK.

## NEW BOOKS

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*Leibniz in France from Arnauld to Voltaire. A study in French reactions to Leibnizianism, 1670–1760.* By W. H. BARBER. (Oxford, At The Clarendon Press 1955. Pp. xi, 276. Price 42s.)

Up to 1760 the only writings of Leibniz accessible to the general French public were his contributions to periodicals in the French language, his correspondence with Clarke, and the *Theodicy*. There were German and Latin translations of the *Monadology* in 1720 and 1721, and his contributions to the *Acta Eruditorum* in Latin, rather less accessible. There is little evidence that his writings were studied with any care in France. For twenty years after his death they were more or less neglected. The success in France of Pope's *Essay on Man*, and the growing reputation of Wolff in Germany, brought a new interest in Leibniz round about 1735, strengthened by the popularity of Madame du Châtelet's *Institutions de Physique*, 1740, in which Leibnizian doctrines (derived mainly from Wolff's *Ontologia*) were expounded. Wolff was also being expounded, and defended against attacks, by a small number of French Protestants living abroad, but writing in French. The interest in Leibniz however was only temporary, and there was no enthusiasm for the doctrines themselves. Newtonian science was increasing in prestige, and metaphysical speculation was considered a waste of time. The monads were regarded as useless for an understanding of the nature of matter and of the phenomena of physics, pre-established harmony was denounced as depriving man of freedom, optimism held to be dangerous to Christianity. The only criticism of Leibniz's ideas of any philosophical depth was contained in Condillac's *Traité des Systèmes* (1749).

Mr. Barber expounds all this very clearly in Part II of his book, and in Part III shows how it affected Voltaire, making a careful study of Voltaire's changing views on freedom and on optimism, the last stage of which is represented by *Candide*. In Part I he gives a brief résumé of Leibniz's correspondence with Arnauld, Malebranche and Bossuet and of his main writings in the French learned periodicals. He keeps a sharp eye on the reviews and discussions in these periodicals—especially the *Journal des Savants* and the *Mémoires de Trévoux*, as an indication of French interest during his period, and his survey of the literature from 1720 to 1760 is wide, admirably arranged and written with great clarity. Mr. Barber does not give us a general picture of the main currents of French thought during his period, but his study is a valuable contribution to this, and it is as such that he presents it.

He makes too much of Leibniz's principle (in the *Discourse on Metaphysics*) that in a true proposition the predicate is somehow contained in the subject, regarding it as the only thing which could make his various views intelligible, and yet as carefully kept out of sight by Leibniz after 1686, on account of the severe handling it got from Arnauld. Indeed he goes so far as to say (17) that Leibniz "voluntarily abandons the possibility of becoming in his lifetime an influential philosopher, in order not to detract from his own value as a negotiator in causes as near his heart as the reunion of the Churches." There is no evidence whatever for this. Mr. Barber even sees the fatal "secret reasons" in what Leibniz writes to Malebranche in 1676. The atmosphere of Mr. Barber's paragraph about this (18–19) is all wrong. So is that of the first half of p. 38, where he is discussing Leibniz's account of extension. It is a mistake to say as Mr. Barber does (14–15) that the notion of an individual substance "logically entails" the notions of everything that can truthfully be predicated of it.

On p. 41 *predicatio* should be *predicatum*.

L. J. RUSSELL.

*The Impasse in Ethics and a Way Out.* (Howison Lecture, 1954. University California Publications in Philosophy, Vol. 28, No. 2, pp. 93-112.  
By BRAND BLANSHARD. (University of California Press, 1955. Price 25 cents.)

In this delightfully written lecture Professor Blanchard surveys the field of contemporary moral philosophy in Great Britain and the U.S.A. He sees divided between *deontologists*, who argue that what is right is not necessarily based on what is good, *naturalists*, who endeavour to reduce ethical judgments to judgments about psychological or sociological facts, and *emotivists*, who deny that ethical utterances are judgments at all and claim that they are expressions of feelings or of attitudes. He rejects the deontological view on the ground that reasons can be given for preferring a right to a wrong action, that these reasons refer ultimately to the goodness of the sort of community within which the right action would be typical. It is not quite clear whether he rejects the naturalistic view, since he holds that "to fulfill and satisfy our nature prompts" is what goodness means. But he certainly rejects the emotivistic view on the ground that it implies that we always talk nonsense when we say that something was good or bad or will be good or bad. He also argues that pro-attitudes or anti-attitudes would be arbitrary if there were no objective appropriateness of pro-attitudes towards some types of action and of anti-attitudes towards others. His own view is that ethical value is necessarily connected with satisfaction and fulfilment, that men (and other living creatures) are therefore naturally good, and that the rightness of an action derives from "its place in the form of the good life." This is not only an excellent introduction to contemporary moral theory but is also a lucid and elegant contribution in its own right, though the discussion of emotivism suffers from a failure to make enough of the distinction between a feeling and an attitude.

H. B. ACTON

*The Emotive Theory of Ethics.* By Avrum STROLL. (University of California Publications in Philosophy, Vol. 28, No. 1, pp. 1-92. University of California Press, 1954. Price \$1.25c.)

This little book should be read by anyone who wishes to understand and assess the importance of the emotive theory of ethics. What Mr. Stroll sets out to do is first to state the theory as carefully as possible, bringing into the open as many hidden or unspoken assumptions as possible, and then to consider the strength of the arguments by which it has been supported. He concludes that it is not one theory but two, and that nothing has been said by its supporters that makes it necessary to accept either of them. The first theory is that ethical terms are purely emotive, and Mr. Stroll's objection is that there are ethical terms that do not arouse beliefs in their interpreters. He argues, however, that since ethical terms, if they express emotion at all, often, if not always, do so voluntarily, they contain elements of belief and communication. In developing this argument Mr. Stroll examines in some detail the differences between exclamations and statements and between different sorts of exclamation. He considers, for example, that such an exclamation as "Ouch!" is not purely expressive since it is a conventional sign of pain. The second theory is that ethical terms, even if they are not purely emotive, must necessarily contain an emotive element. Mr. Stroll's objection to this cannot be expounded in a few words, but roughly amounts to saying that those who hold this form of the theory do not succeed in distinguishing their view from ethical naturalism.

that naturalism requires ethical utterances to be capable of truth and falsity. These are only the bare bones of an argument that is distinguished by careful elaboration of detail and an unusual philosophical detachment. It is Mr. Stroll's view that there is nothing new in the second, less radical form of emotivism but that the first, pure form of it is new though false. His bibliography has no mention of two early versions of this theory which, as far as I know, compete for the distinction of being first. They are: C. D. Broad's "Is 'Goodness' the name of a Simple Non-natural Quality?" (Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 1933-4), in which the view is stated and attributed to A. E. Duncan-Jones; and W. H. F. Barnes's "A suggestion about Value," in *Analysis* for March 1934, which was part of a paper read at the Jowett Society in Oxford on November 8, 1933.

H. B. ACTON.

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*Royce: On the Human Self.* By JAMES HARRY COTTON. (Harvard University Press; O.U.P., London, 1954. Pp. 347. Price \$5.00.)

This book deals with the main philosophical doctrines of Josiah Royce, who was generally regarded as the leading American representative of the neo-Hegelian movement of the late nineteenth century. Professor Cotton shows clearly, however, the extent to which Royce's Hegelianism, or neo-Kantianism, was modified by the popular pragmatism of his day. Royce's views are put before us by means of selected extracts from his writings, interspersed with the author's own comments and criticism; and the central thread which connects these extracts is, as the title implies, what Royce had to say on the "human self."

Naturally, most of the fine-spun arguments on this topic have, for us, an archaic ring; and Royce's idealist metaphysic, like that of Bradley from whom he differed sharply on many points, makes somewhat tedious reading for the modern student. But we have to remember that Royce wrote in an age when impressive but confused concepts were still the current coin of philosophical discussion; and that the logical analysis of such concepts was not to be undertaken for many years to come. Fortunately, this conspectus of Royce's philosophical endeavour covers, though all too briefly, some of his contributions in the field of logic, as well as an interchange of views between himself, Peirce and James. The two chapters devoted to these topics form the most interesting part of the book, for Royce's work on symbolic logic was in the tradition of Boole, Peano and Frege and closely allied to that of Peirce. It may seem therefore all the more curious that a logician of Royce's calibre, who had no time for the logic of Bradley and Bosanquet, should have committed himself to all the linguistic confusions involved in that familiar Hegelian talk about the Absolute. However, Royce is certainly one of the venerated names in American philosophy and Professor Cotton has provided, as the dust-cover puts it, "the first full-length study of Royce's philosophy in English." He is to be congratulated on having performed his task so judiciously.

J. HARTLAND-SWANN.

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Books also received.

CHARLES SCHOENFELD. *God and Country*. Philosophical Library, New York.

1955. Pp. (vi) & 119. \$3.00.

Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution, 1954. Government Printing Office, Washington. 1955. Pp. (ix) & 455.

BEN KIMPEL. *Moral Principles in the Bible*. Philosophical Library, New York. Pp. 171. \$4.50.

*Aristotelis De Anima*. Recognovit brevique adnotatione instruxit W. D. Ross. Oxford University Press. 1956. Pp. (ix) & 110.

Tr. JOHN WARRINGTON, Introduction by Sir David Ross. *Aristotle's Metaphysics*. J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd. Everyman Library. 1956. Pp. (xxvii) & 388. 7s.

JOHN COHEN and MARK HANSEL. *Risk and Gambling*. Longmans, Green & Co. 1956. Pp. (viii) & 153. 14s.

VARIOUS AUTHORS. Intro. by Gilbert Ryle. *The Revolution in Philosophy*. Macmillan & Co. Ltd. 1956. Pp. (v) & 125. 10s. 6d.

Trans. and Intro. by A. E. TAYLOR. *Plato: Philebus and Epinomis*. Ed. by Raymond Klibansky. Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd. 1956. Pp. (vi) & 271. 21s.

HERBERT MARCUSE. *Eros and Civilization*. Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. 1956. Pp. (xii) & 276. 25s.

Dr. M. AHMED. *The Theory of Judgment in the Philosophies of F. H. Bradley and John Cook Wilson*. The University of Dacca Press. 1955. Pp. 295. Rs. 10.

APOSTOLOS MAKRAKIS. *The Foundation of Philosophy*. Tr. by D. Cummings. The Orthodox Christian Educational Society, Illinois. 1955. Pp. (x) & 193. No price given.

FRANCIS M. MYERS. *The Warfare of Democratic Ideals*. The Antioch Press, Ohio. 1956. Pp. 261. \$3.50.

LIU WU-CHI. *Confucius: His Life and Time*. Philosophical Library, New York. Pp. (xv) & 189. \$3.75.

A. B. PURANI. *Sri Audobindo's Savitri: An Approach and a Study*. Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. 1956. Pp. (viii) & 393. Rs. 10.

S. K. MAITRA. *The Meeting of the East and the West in Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy*. Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. 1956. Pp. 451 & (xxx). No price given.

CONSTANCE ROWE. *Voltaire and the State*. Oxford University Press. 1956. Pp. (xi) & 254. 32s.

Ed. and introduction by H. G. ALEXANDER. *The Leibniz-Clarke Correspondence*. Manchester University Press. 1956. Pp. (lvi) & 200. 16s.

OSCAR W. MILLER. *The Kantian Thing-in-Itself or The Creative Mind*. Philosophical Library, New York. 1956. Pp. (xix) & 142. \$3.75.

JAMES WILKINSON MILLER. *Exercises in Introductory Symbolic Logic*. Edward Bros. Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan. 1956. (Lithoprint.) Pp. (ix) & 59. \$1.50.

THOMAS E. HILL. *Ethics in Theory and Practice*. Thomas Y. Crowell Company, New York. 1956. Pp. (xiii) & 431. \$4.50.

A. DA SILVA MELLO. Tr. by M. B. FIERZ. *Man: His Life, His Education, His Happiness*. Philosophical Library, New York. 1956. Pp. 729. \$6.00.

FREDERICK COPLESTON, S.J. *Contemporary Philosophy*. Burns & Oates. 1956. Pp. (ix) & 230. 18s.

E. L. MASCALL. *Christian Theology and Natural Science*. The Bampton Lectures, 1956. Longmans, Green & Co. 1956. Pp. (xvii) & 328. 25s.

JOHN HOSPERS. *An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis*. Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. 1956. Pp. (xii) & 532. 25s.

BERNARD WUELLNER, S.J. *Dictionary of Scholastic Philosophy*. The Bruce Publishing Company, Wisconsin. 1956. Pp. (xvi) & 138. \$4.25.

KENNETH E. BOCK. *The Acceptance of Histories Toward a Perspective for Social Science*. University of California Press. 1956. Pp. 132. \$1.75.

Ed. G. E. W. WOLSTENHOLME and ELAINE C. P. MILLAR. *Extrasensory Perception*. A Ciba Foundation Symposium. J. & A. Churchill Ltd. 1956. Pp. (viii) & 240. 27s. 6d.

O. BRRIÈRE, S.J. *Fifty Years of Chinese Philosophy*, 1898-1950. Tr. by Laurence G. Thompson. George Allen & Unwin. 1956. Pp. 159. 21s.

Ed. A. A. LUCE and T. E. JESSOP. *The Works of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne*. Volume 8. Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd. 1956. Pp. (viii) & 312. 30s.

Ed. PETER LASLETT. *Philosophy, Politics and Society*. Basil Blackwell, Oxford. 1956. Pp. (xv) & 184. 18s.

Tr. N. J. DAWOOD. *The Koran*. Penguin Classics. 1956. Pp. 428. 5s.

HARRY A. WOLFSON. *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*. Vol. I. Harvard University Press. 1956. Oxford University Press. Pp. (xxviii) & 635. 80s.

DAVID A. STEWART. *Preface to Empathy*. Philosophical Library, New York. 1956. Pp. 157. \$3.75.

UPTON C. EWING. *Thresholds of Existence*. Philosophical Library, New York. 1956. Pp. (x) & 286. \$3.75.

PAUL OSKAR KRISTELLER. *The Classics and Renaissance Thought*. Martin Classical Lectures, Vol. XV. Oxford University Press. 1956. Pp. 106. No price given.

HERBERT L. SEARLES. *Logic and Scientific Methods*. An Introductory Course. Second Edition. The Ronald Press Company, New York. 1956. Pp. (viii) & 378. \$4.25.

ERICK FRANK. *Wissen, Wollen, Glauben*. Ed. Ludwig Edelstein. (German and English.) Artemis-Verlag. Zürich. 1955. Pp. 508.

ERNST HOFFMAN. *Pädagogischer Humanismus*. Artemis-Verlag, Zürich. 1955. Pp. 364.

H. KAYSER. *Akroasis*. Benno Schwabe & Co., Basle.

KARLO OEDINGEN. *Die Spekulative und die Geoffenbarte Wahrheit*. Balduin Pick Verlag, Koln. P. 103.

WALDO ROSS. *El Mundo Metafísico de Andres Avelino*. Sociedad Dominicana de Filosofia. 1956. Pp. 23. No price given.

DOMENICO ANTONIO CARDONE. *Il Divenire e L'Uomo*. Vol. I. Ricerche Filosofiche, Palmi. 1956. Pp. 211.

RODOLFO MONDOLFO. *L'Infinito Nel Pensiero Dell'Antichità Classica*. La Nuova Italia, Firenze. 1956. Pp. (x) & 635.

ANDRÉ LAMOUCHE. *La Théorie Harmonique*. Tome II. Biologie. Gauthier-Villars, Paris. 1956. Pp. 575. 1,400 fr.

JEAN HYPPOLITE. *Études sur Marx et Hegel*. Librairie Marcel Rivière et Cie, Paris. 1955. Pp. 204. 600 frs.

ALBERT CARTIER. *Existence et Vérité*. Presses Universitaires de France. 1955. Pp. 258.

PAUL GINESTIER. *La Pensée Anglo-Saxonne depuis 1900*. Presses Universitaires de France. 1956. Pp. 134.

JOSEPH DE TONQUÉDEC, S.J. *Merveilleux Metapsychique et Miracle Chrétien*. Centre D'Etudes Laennec. Pp. 133. No price given.

DR. MUBAHAT TÜRKER. *Üç Tehâfut Bakimindan Felsefe Ve Din Münasebeti*. Turk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi, Ankara. 1956. Pp. 417.

## INSTITUTE NOTES

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Edited by Professor G. Ryle

With the Co-operation of Prof. Sir F. C. Bartlett and Prof. C. D. Broad.

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# PHILOSOPHY

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### REFLECTING ON MORALS

JOHN M. HEMS

IN order to do anything intelligently a certain degree of reflection is necessary. This is particularly obvious with regard to any practical activity or occupation. Take, for example, the case of a naïve bricklayer. Let us assume that this man never reflects upon the nature of his occupation, but simply looks upon it as a more or less mechanical procedure of laying one brick upon another for a certain period of time during the day. He does not relate his occupation with the occupations of his fellow-workmen, or even with the purpose of erecting buildings. If such a man were left to his own devices on a desert island with a plentiful supply of bricks and mortar, we could imagine him erecting a gigantic pinnacle of bricks, without purpose or meaning, where a more intelligent man would have endeavoured to construct a shelter against the rigours of the climate.

Naïveté such as this is rare at the practical level, and no doubt the naïve bricklayer would qualify as being mentally deficient. Yet such naïveté is by no means uncommon at the theoretical level. But regardless whether an occupation be practical or theoretical, in order that we really know what we are about we must reflect upon that occupation and upon the relationship in which we stand to it. The fact that theoretical occupations are themselves already reflective in no way absolves the theoretician from carrying out this further reflection—in his case, the reflection upon himself as reflecting.

All of this is no doubt very obvious. It seems almost a platitude to assert that in order to do anything intelligently we must reflect upon what we are doing. But particularly in the theoretical as opposed to the practical domain, the temptation is to assent to this obvious truth and, having assented to it, proceed to ignore it. It will always seem to a certain type of theoretical intelligence that

whatever is obvious is trivial, and hence to be dismissed. Thus, it is not sufficient that a philosopher (for example) should simply agree that he is engaged in a reflective activity. If all we were concerned with were the fact that philosophy is a reflective activity why then there is no escaping from that fact. Neither, if we are honest, is there any escaping from the recognition of that fact—once it has been pointed out to us. The trouble is, however, that our attention is apt to wander. What we must do, therefore, if we are to check this wandering attention is to keep the fact that we are reflecting upon experience constantly in mind. In other words, we must grant the recognition of this fact the status of a methodological principle.

The question now arises as to the justification for adopting such a principle. At the practical level the failure to reflect has obvious consequences. At the theoretical level the consequences are perhaps less obvious, but no less grave. In the interests of clarity I shall offer an exceedingly crude example of the kinds of confusion arising out of the failure to reflect at the theoretical level.

Sigmund Freud and his successors have, in the course of their researches in the field of psychoanalysis, laid great emphasis upon what they refer to as "infantile sexuality." It is maintained that all normal children pass through three main stages in their development, these stages being first, an incestuous stage, secondly, a homosexual stage, and finally reaching the heterosexual stage. In other words, a child in its early infancy is sexually attracted towards the parent of the opposite sex, and in late childhood is sexually attracted towards children of the same sex. But what justification is there to offer for this description of childhood in terms of sexual deviation? There is, in fact, none. The description is a result of a failure on the part of the psychologist to reflect upon his own function. Admittedly if the psychologist were to act towards his mother in the manner of a child at the breast we should be inclined to regard his conduct as somewhat sinister, and if he were to behave towards his fellows in the manner of a child of ten we might also feel rather dubious. But a psychologist is not a child, nor is a child an adult. What is appropriate behaviour for the one is not necessarily appropriate for the other. If the psychologist were simply to take the trouble of reflecting upon the fact that he is an adult reflecting upon the behaviour of children this naïve confusion need not arise. Certainly the psychologists who subscribe to the notion of "infantile sexuality" are primarily interested in abnormal psychology and in the treatment of neurosis; and no doubt there is something to be said for the view that the behaviour of neurotics is childish. There is nothing to be said in favour of the view that the behaviour of children is neurotic.

The error of "false identification" exemplified in the speculations of the Freudian psychologist is also to be found in the writings of moral philosophers. Indeed, the main error of naïve theoreticians in general is the confusion of references in the first person with references in the third. It is always possible for the theoretician to think of the person involved in the situation he is considering either as himself or as someone else. Or, to put the point more accurately, it is always possible for a man whose job it is to assess in some respects or other a human situation to think of the person involved in the situation either as "I" or as "he." I say this is the more accurate way of putting the matter, because it is possible for me to refer to myself in the third person as well as in the first, and so it is not sufficient in order that we distinguish between the first and third party reference that we distinguish simply between the idea we have of ourselves and the idea we have of others. If we are to avoid confusing the two types of reference we must distinguish between the references themselves, and the distinction between myself as "I" and myself as "he" must be made just as clearly as the distinction between myself as "I" and another person as "he." So far as the actual reference is concerned, there is no distinction at all between myself and another as "he." In either case the reference is third party. There is, of course, nothing in itself wrong about making these diverse references. The assessor has a perfect right to refer to the person involved in the situation either in the first or in the third person, *provided* he clearly distinguishes between the two alternative references. Should he fail to make this distinction he will almost invariably be led into spurious identification of these references, together with the subsequent application of categories which belong to himself as assessor with categories which belong to himself, or another, as agent. For it is not the case that the categories which apply to references in the first person need apply to those in the third. It is for this reason that the psychologist, if he is to furnish us with accurate information regarding the experiences of childhood, must bear in mind that he is not a child and that the categories which apply to him do not necessarily apply to children. Similarly, if the moral philosopher is to furnish us with accurate information regarding moral experience, he must bear in mind that he is not the moral agent. The fact that he has been a moral agent himself is no more (and, of course, no less) significant than that the psychoanalyst was once a child himself. Either is at liberty to draw upon his own experiences should it suit his purpose to do so. But the distinction between himself as assessor and the subject (whether the subject be himself or another) must be clearly and consistently maintained if his report is to be of any significance. Otherwise the tendency will be to confuse the references, so that the

assessor will develop the ambiguous attitude involving identification and non-identification with the agent, which in turn gives rise to a variety of confusions as regards the nature of the action itself.

By way both of explaining and of exemplifying what is here maintained, I shall offer some examples of this confusion as it figures in the writings of certain reputable philosophers.

The problem of "subjective" and "objective" rightness was of great concern to philosophers of the "deontologist" school, such as E. F. Carritt and W. D. Ross.<sup>1</sup> Ought a man to do what is right, or what he thinks is right? It would not be to our purpose here to examine in detail the many subtle distinctions and careful arguments which were advanced by these philosophers in their treatment of this question. We need only concern ourselves with the broad outlines of the question at issue. According to the objective view, a man's duty consists in doing what is right: according to the subjective view, a man's duty consists in doing what he thinks is right. Neither view seems adequate as a description of moral experience, since from the subjective point of view it can be the case that a man ought to do what is wrong, while from the objective point of view it can be the case that a man ought to do what he thinks is wrong. It should be noted that both the subjective and the objective view imply ethical objectivity, for both distinguish between what is right and what is thought right—the subjective view being that although something is right a man ought to do what he thinks is right, and the objective view being that regardless what a man thinks is right he ought to do what is right. To subscribe to this distinction at all is to subscribe to the notion that something is right, regardless whether we are of the opinion that a man ought to do what is right or what he merely thinks is right. Both sides assume that there is such a thing as objective rightness, and differ only in their estimate as regards what a man ought to do in the light of this assumption.

Even if we grant that there is such a thing as an objectively right action, the question arises as to whether the knowledge of such an action is in fact accessible, and, if so, to whom. Apparently not to the agent. The objectively right action, for the moral agent, can only be the action he ought to do if only he could discover what it was. Yet if the action is completely unknown how can it be regarded as an action which ought to be done? Obviously, the action cannot be completely unknown, and we do not have far to seek in order to discover the implied possessor of this knowledge: namely, the philosopher who is considering the problem. From both the subjective and objective points of view, the agent is ignorant of

<sup>1</sup> See the books *Ethical and Political Thinking* and *The Foundations of Ethics* of these respective authors.

what is right whereas the assessor knows what is right. Where, then, is the connection between the objectively right action and obligation? Nowhere, it would seem. But if there is no connection between the objectively right action and obligation, there seems little point in asking whether or not an agent ought to do what is objectively right. On the other hand, if there is to be a connection between obligation and the objectively right action, this requires that the agent knows what is right. But in that case the whole question becomes ludicrous. No moral agent has ever concerned himself with the problem as to whether he ought to do what he thinks is right or what he knows is right. Thus, not only is the agent excluded from the knowledge of what is right, but he *must* be so excluded if the question regarding whether he ought to do what is right or what he thinks is right is to be raised at all.

Admittedly the agent never knows what is right in the sense that he can never be absolutely sure of the consequences of his actions. Success may not be a sufficient condition of an objectively right action, but it is a necessary condition. The action I ought to do, or think I ought to do, is an action which has not yet been done; and just because of this I can never know that *any* action I ought to do is "right" in the sense of fulfilling its purpose. But neither can the philosopher know this. Alternatively, once an action is accomplished I may see that it was right, in the sense that it has succeeded; and, other things being equal, I can see this just as plainly as the philosopher or anyone else. The fact that I can look back upon my moral experience and say that I ought to have done something other than what I did, even although I thought what I did was right at the time, is apparently taken by the deontologist as evidence that in any moral situation there is some specific action I categorically ought to do. But when I say that I ought to have done something other than I did, what I mean is that assuming, for example, I was under an obligation to help this man, the obligation would have been fulfilled (as in fact it was not) by doing this other action. I do not mean that I ought to have done something else in the general sense—i.e. that instead of helping the man I ought to have hindered him. It is because (let us say) that I *have* hindered him that I say I ought to have done something else: assuming I was under such obligation then, I now wish I had done something else. But this is not to say that the action was categorically binding—even in the sense that it would have been so, had I been aware of it. For, if the action were so regarded, it would no longer be a question of wishing I had done it but of wishing that I ought to have done it: and that no one can wish.

So far as our present inquiry is concerned, however, what is of interest to us is less the presence of contradictions within the notion

of the "objectively right action," than the manner in which such a contradictory notion should have arisen at all. As has been previously indicated, the main error to be encountered in the writings of naïve theoreticians is that of failing to distinguish between first and third party reference. When the subject under consideration is human action a further confusion—in the present case closely allied to this last—is liable to arise with regard to the *time* of the action. Just as it is possible to envisage a situation either in the first or in the third person, so also is it possible to posit an action either as accomplished or as unaccomplished. The language employed by the philosopher is not a reliable guide as regards these distinctions. It is possible to employ language which implies that one is thinking in the first person when one is actually thinking in third, and vice versa. Similarly with the language employed in reference to accomplished and unaccomplished action. Unless care is exercised, this state of affairs may lead to considerable confusion. Only where an action is posited as accomplished can I regard it as objectively right. Only where an action is posited as unaccomplished can I regard myself as being under an obligation to perform it. I cannot think of myself as being under an obligation to perform an action and also think of the action as accomplished, since if it is accomplished I am no longer under an obligation. This is obvious enough. But if we adopt a naïvely theoretical position we may make the mistake of supposing that *someone else* can be under an obligation to perform an action which is posited by us as accomplished. We think of ourselves simply as *knowing* something that the agent does not know—namely the right action—and there is nothing in itself contradictory in the notion that we know something which another man does not know. Where the contradiction arises is in positing an action as accomplished and unaccomplished simultaneously. Moral agency requires that an action has not been done, while moral assessment requires that an action has been done; and it is impossible to regard oneself as agent and assessor at one and the same time in respect of one and the same action. In order to assess the rightness of an action it is necessary that we think of the agent in the third person, since the action is posited as accomplished. But it is only where we think of the agent in the first person that we can regard him as a moral agent. Action and agent are, however, necessary and reciprocal poles in the moral situation, and their mutual isolation can only lead to distortion. Such isolation is inherent both in the "subjective" and in the "objective" theory of rightness, and the result is a confusion of the future with the past, the unaccomplished with the accomplished action.

The elusiveness of this temporal confusion is due to the ease with which the person of the agent may be altered while employing

language which does not indicate any such inconsistency. Although the "subjectivist" identifies himself with the agent, it remains possible for him to refer to the agent in the third person, and, despite the fact that he himself would be prepared to admit that he cannot be under an obligation to perform an action which has already been done, this third party reference may lead him to regard the action in question as known to be right. Thus, he identifies himself with the agent in that he regards the action as obligatory, and does not identify himself with the agent in that the agent does not know the action is right. Although the "objectivist," on the other hand, does not identify himself with the agent, it remains possible for him to refer to the agent in the first person, and this is liable to mislead him into regarding the action which is known to be right as also obligatory. But if the action is to be regarded as the action which the agent ought to do, it must be posited as unaccomplished, and therefore not known to be right. These contradictions in the "subjective" and "objective" views are by no means incidental. The "subjectivist" is bound to regard himself at one point as the assessor, and the "objectivist" is bound to regard himself at one point as the moral agent. Otherwise neither will be considering whether a man ought to do what is right or what he thinks is right at all, since for the "subjectivist" nothing will be right and for the "objectivist" nothing will be obligatory. But once these contradictions have been explicated it becomes difficult to assign much significance to the notion of "objective rightness" as it figures both in the "subjective" and in the "objective" views. The objectively right action is an essentially contradictory notion—an action at once accomplished and unaccomplished, an action which is not an action; in short, a thought which no one can think.

Confusion of person is not restricted to the philosophers of the deontological school. Modern "philosophy of language" shares the naïveté of more traditional philosophy in this respect. It will be remembered that according to the emotive theory of ethics which logical-positivism endorses, when I make a moral judgment I am only expressing my attitude towards the action or situation in question, and exhorting my audience to adopt a similar attitude towards it. "The question for moral philosophy," says Ayer, "is not whether a certain action is right or wrong, but what is implied by saying it is right, or saying it is wrong." The description of a man's activities is in no way amplified by saying that he acted rightly or wrongly, and if two observers differ in their evaluations, and are each equally well informed as regards the facts, it does not follow that either of them is contradicting himself—as would be the case if there were a logical connection between the facts and their evaluation of them. But if there is no logical, neither is there any

scientific connection, for we can only point to the facts and say "that is good," "that is bad," etc. The facts cannot provide us with evidence for our moral judgments since the facts are precisely what we judge morally. "Moral judgments are reasons only in the sense that they determine attitudes. One attempts to influence another person morally by calling his attention to certain natural features of the situation which are likely to evoke from him the desired response. Or again, one may give reasons to oneself as a means of settling on an attitude or, more importantly, as a means of coming to some practical decision." Where moral judgments are passed upon historical or fictitious persons, what we are doing is to evaluate a certain *kind* of person or action and so encourage or discourage in ourselves or in others propensities to act likewise. A moral judgment "may be regarded as expressing the attitude which the reasons given for it are calculated to evoke." It is an element in the patterns of behaviour which make up our moral attitudes. In so far as moral judgment contributes towards defining such attitudes, it may be said to express them. The objection may be raised that on this view there cannot be such a thing as ethical disagreement, but this point need not prove embarrassing. It is indeed true that we indulge in ethical disputation. One man will say that X is good, another will say that not X is good, but such disagreement is of a personal nature, and no actual contradiction is involved. There is nothing in the argument to imply that X is good *and* bad. Each of the disputants is merely expressing his own attitude towards X. To offer as an argument against this an example in which X "really" is good, is impossible; such an example would in turn merely express the attitude of the person giving the example. "Moral judgments are emotive rather than descriptive . . . they are persuasive expressions of attitudes."

The foregoing account of the emotive theory is taken from Ayer's article in the magazine *Horizon*, but differs little from the general view expressed in *Language, Truth and Logic*. Ayer is now prepared to concede that "to say . . . that these moral judgments are merely expressive of certain feelings of approval or disapproval is an oversimplification." But apart from his rather vague references to "patterns of behaviour," nothing is done to make good this deficiency. He also incorporates in this later account the notion of the persuasive element in ethical evaluations, and hence the possibility of significant disagreement over questions of value. This point was briefly referred to in the second edition of *Language, Truth and Logic*: "a consideration of any dispute about a matter of taste will show that there can be disagreement without formal contradiction, and that in order to alter another man's opinions, in the sense of getting him to change his attitude, it is not necessary to contradict anything

he asserts. A great deal of what passes for ethical dispute is disagreement regarding facts: "it is, however, also possible to influence other people by a suitable choice of emotive language." It is perhaps misleading of Ayer to say that there can be disagreement about a question of value according to his theory, since what is really meant is a disagreement in attitude. But whereas his earlier contention in *Language, Truth and Logic* (that "one really never does dispute about questions of value, for such dispute is not really about a question of value, but about a question of fact") might have been taken to imply that if both disputants were sufficiently well-informed agreement would be reached, his later contention bears no such implication. This is important, because the earlier account left room for a more orthodox sense of "value." If in order that ethical agreement be reached it is only required that the facts of the case be known, this might be taken to imply that quite definite ethical characteristics are attached to this or that action or situation; and since not even Ayer has ever maintained that agreement regarding facts constitutes agreement in moral judgment, this might mean that there really were ethical values in the traditional sense—for otherwise, what would we be agreeing about? In short, this would imply some sort of ethical objectivity, which is a notion very foreign to Ayer's way of thinking. Nevertheless, it is an empirical fact that we do disagree, and since ethical values are scouted by the logical-positivist, something must be found to disagree about. This is supplied in the form of affective attitudes of persons indulging in ethical disputation, and the examination of these attitudes is the province of the psychologist rather than the philosopher.

The emotive theory of ethics has received its most extensive presentation in C. L. Stevenson's *Ethics and Language*. Stevenson gives a detailed account of the operation of ethical terms in ordinary discourse. He realizes that any bald statement which relegates ethics to the psychiatric ward will be objected to on empirical grounds. If "X is good" is equivalent to "most people like X," ethics is a matter to be decided by ballot; if it is equivalent to "I like X," we are left to the vagaries of introspection. Stevenson believes that where the traditional public-interest and self-interest theories fail is in concentrating exclusively upon the descriptive connotation of the word "good." To be at all convincing "interest" theories must attend more carefully to the emotive disposition of ethical terms; for the function of ethical statements is not to convey information, but to influence people. If I make an ethical observation to my neighbour, I am not merely acquiescing that I, or most men, approve or disapprove of the action or situation in question. What I am trying to do is to get him to adopt a similar attitude, and the

possibility of my being able to do so is dependent upon the emotive meanings of ethical terms. Many, perhaps most, words carry an emotive as well as a descriptive meaning. This may be brought out by considering words like "negro" and "nigger," "sensuous" and "sensual," "free-love" and "adultery," etc., where the difference in meaning is emotive (expressing the attitude of the person employing the preferred word, and also tending to arouse similar attitudes in the person addressed), while the descriptive meaning remains constant. Words may thus be used descriptively to express the beliefs of the speaker, or emotively to express his attitudes in a persuasive or prescriptive manner. In this sense, ethical propositions are imperatives. But the imperative element is not crudely obvious. If it were, the propositions would lose their effectiveness; no man can approve or like anything to order. (An obvious criticism of the theory at this point is that if Stevenson's work is successful it should render the imperative element obvious, and thus rob the ethical terms of their effectiveness.) If I am arguing the rights and wrongs of a case with an opponent, I may offer him factual information, but once he has accepted the facts in question there is nothing more to be done, assuming he still disagrees with me, except to resort to persuasion. But it is just at this point that the dispute becomes ethical. The manner in which language operates on such occasions is often by means of definitions. A change in meaning may cause a change in interest, and this is effected by means of "persuasive definitions." It is characteristic of persuasive definitions that their emotive function remains constant while their conceptual content is changed. For example, the question as to whether Pope is a poet, may be regarded as linguistic in so far as it can be resolved into the question as to whether we are prepared to extend the conceptual meaning of the word "poet" in order to bestow that honorific title upon Pope. Ethical terms proper, however, have no conceptual content, possess no descriptive meaning, but are purely emotive in their function. Nevertheless the meanings of ethical terms are constant to at least this extent: that such expressions as "X is good" are equivalent to "I approve of X; do so likewise!"

According to the emotive theory the function of the philosopher is an extremely limited one. Yet despite the severity of the limitations it imposes, the method remains exceedingly naïve. Let us consider the procedure more closely. The philosopher sets out to analyse the proposition "X is good." This proposition is considered in the light of its employment in ordinary conversations: it is analysed, in other words, as a *statement*. But it is important to notice that although "X is good" is to be analysed as a statement, the person making the statement is excluded from the parentheses. In spite of this fact, however, the analysis offered is of the type, "I like X; do so likewise."

## REFLECTING ON MORALS

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What this amounts to is that the speaker, who was excluded from the proposition, is suddenly introduced in the analysis. But this is not a legitimate procedure. The resultant analysis (i.e. "I like X; do so likewise") is not an analysis of "X is good" at all, but an analysis of "I say X is good." Obviously, however, the analyst wishes to obtain an analysis of "X is good" which will apply to *anyone* who enunciates this proposition, and not simply to himself. Yet the analysis which is offered is not third party, but first: "I like X; do so likewise." And the reason for this is not hard to find: it would be too obvious a reduction of ethics to conventionalism if it were maintained that whenever I said "X is good" I meant that other people liked X, and wanted me to like it too. Nevertheless, if the analyst is to obtain an analysis which will apply to persons other than himself, the analysis should be in the form: "A likes X, and wants me to like it too." But this third-party analysis can only be obtained by analysing a third-party proposition. "A likes X, and wants me to like it too," is neither an analysis of the proposition "X is good" nor of the proposition "I say X is good," but an analysis of the proposition "A says X is good." (If to this it is objected that the proper form of this proposition is in turn, "P says A says X is good," then this is admittedly the case where we refuse to break the charmed circle of third party reference. No regress of this kind follows where the "P" in question is the analyst himself. The alternative is linguistic solipsism.) What the linguistic analyst does, is to apply the analysis of "I say X is good" to propositions of the form "A says X is good"; and indeed it is from this confusion of propositional reference that the analysis offered derives much of its apparent force. For if the analyst were simply maintaining that whenever he said "X is good," what he meant was that he liked X and wanted us to like it too, then this confession might arouse little interest. True, if we were discussing the rights and wrongs of a case with him, we should have to bear in mind the fact that he was employing the expression "X is good" in this particular way. But taken in itself, the fact that the expression means this when he employs it is of little consequence except, perhaps, to himself. What makes it seem a matter of some consequence to us, is the extension of this analysis to *our* propositions. But this is only effected by means of the referential confusion already cited, i.e. the application to the proposer's proposition of an analysis which is only applicable to that of the analyst. This identification of what other people mean by "X is good" with what the analyst means by that expression is an instance of arbitrariness, not of analytical acumen.

Admittedly it may sometimes be the case that the proper analysis of "A says X is good" is, as a matter of fact, "A likes X, and wants me to like it too." For my own part, I am perfectly willing to grant

that there are many occasions upon which this analysis is sound. When people say conventionally that something is good, a this amounts to is that they like something and want me to like it too. This is all their statement signifies, so far as I am concerned. Yet this is not necessarily what people have in mind when they issue moral injunctions. Such people often imagine themselves to be in a position of authority as regards the behaviour of others: sometimes on supposedly religious grounds, but more frequently upon no grounds other than their own self-importance. What they mean is absurd, but by a process of "double-think" they mean it none the less. Thus, ethical terms are employed to emphasize personal prejudice and generally "lay down the law." We often hear people telling one another that they "ought" to do something as though they were in a position to put one another under moral obligation by mere force of words. If we could do this we could also say "let there be light"—and light there would be. People who talk in this vein are suffering from delusions of grandeur, and it is important that they should realize the basic worthlessness of those god-like pronouncements. But the linguistic analysis of ethical statements will never effect this realization, for that analysis remains constant no matter how ethical terms are employed, and therefore cannot be invoked in order to explicate their abuse.

The propositional confusion here outlined parallels the confusion already described in the writings of the deontologists, and stems from a similar lack of reflection. We cannot regard ourselves at one and the same time as assessor and agent in respect of one and the same action. The reflection which is required in order to distinguish between assessor and agent must also be invoked if we are to distinguish between analyst and proposer. Only thus are we enabled to keep our references clear and consistent—be they propositional or factual. In one way the linguistic method offers stronger temptations than most to overlook first and third party references, since from one point of view all the references are third party. That the first person singular is employed in "I say X is good," for example, does not alter the fact that the reference is third party in so far as it is treated by the analyst qua analyst. Linguistic analysis is in this sense an objective method. But this makes no difference so far as our reflective discipline is concerned. Although from one point of view "I say X is good" is third party, it is propositionally first. Linguistic method dispenses with the distinction between first and third party reference in that it is indifferent as to who enunciates the proposition "I say X is good"—whether it be myself or another. But the distinction re-emerges at the new (i.e. propositional) level. We have now to distinguish between "I say X is good" and "A says X is good"—these being the propositional forms of first and third

arity reference respectively. We may remain indifferent as to who initiates these propositions only so long as we distinguish between the propositions themselves. They are not identical. The tendency to identify them, as instanced by the application of the analysis of "I say X is good" to "A says X is good," arises out of the naïve identification of the analyst with the proposer. "X is good" stands in a similar relation to the proposer as the act to the agent, and stands in a similar relation to the analyst as the act to the assessor. The reference to proposition for the linguistic analyst parallels the reference to action of the deontologist, and to analyse a proposition is no more to propose it than to assess an action is to perform it.

The naiveté which leads to the exclusion of the analyst from the parentheses of the proposition as enunciated by him, results in the application of identical analyses to his own propositions and those of others. But may not this confusion be avoided where the analyst directs his attention exclusively upon his *own* propositions? This certainly has the appearance of a less arbitrary procedure. Providing the analyst does not meddle with propositions as enunciated by others, it should be impossible to confuse the analyses appropriate to the latter with analyses appropriate to his own propositions. The difficulty is to see much importance in such analyses except for the analyst himself and, perhaps, for those standing in a personal relationship to him. On the face of it such analyses may be of psychological interest, but they can hardly be of interest to philosophers. If, however, the propositions in question are considered from the standpoint of the facts to which they are related, then the application of such relations might fairly claim to be of philosophical interest as offering a basis for the classifying of propositions in accordance with those facts. For example, it might be the case that certain propositions which are usually thought to refer to the same sort of fact really refer to totally distinct facts, and the establishing of such a distinction would be a genuine philosophical undertaking. Even although the philosopher who attempts this undertaking concerns himself exclusively with propositions as enunciated by him, thus avoiding confusion of *propositional* reference, yet the *factual* references may readily be confused if the facts in question happen to be, on the one hand, an experience of the analyst and, on the other, an experience of someone else. For the mere fact that the proposition refers to the experiences of different *persons* may lead to the notion that the experiences themselves are essentially different, which by no means follows.

An attempt to distinguish between having an obligation and having a feeling of obligation is made in Chapter Eleven of R. M. Hare's *The Language of Morals*, where he writes: "It is important to point out a fact which has been singularly ignored by some

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moralists, that to say of someone that he has a feeling of obligation, is not the same as to say that he has an obligation. To say this former is to make a statement of psychological fact, to say the latter is to make a value judgment." It should be noted that this reference is made in the third person, i.e. it states what the assessor (or moralist) has to say regarding the moral agent. But, as so often happens in moral philosophy, there is an implicit reference in the first person, i.e. to the assessor, with which the reference in the third person is confused. Under cover of this confusion, what is merely a difference in personal reference between identical statements emerges as a seeming difference in the nature of the two statements themselves. The fact of the matter is that considerations of this kind not only have not, but never could have, any bearing upon the distinctions they are supposed to establish. The dice are loaded, as it were, at the very outset of the game, inasmuch as the convention of referring via the assessor to what *really* ought to be done, and referring via the agent to what *he* merely *feels* ought to be done, is assumed. The only reason why such subterfuge as this passes unnoticed, is that when we read such passages we naturally identify ourselves with the assessor, since to read a book on moral philosophy is not to be an agent in a moral situation. It is only by begging the question in this way that any relevance to the supposed distinction between having an obligation and having a feeling of obligation is maintained. In "third-person" examples of the type we are now considering, it is always I who make the value-judgment and the other fellow who merely has a feeling. But there is no reason why, if his feeling he ought to do X be a psychological fact, my feeling he ought to do Y should not also be a psychological fact. Alternatively, there is no reason why, if what I say he ought to do be a value-judgment, what he says he ought to do should not be a value-judgment. And this will always be the case where the examples under consideration contain references to more than one consciousness.

The propositions invoked by Hare in support of the supposed distinction may be stated as follows: "X ought to do Y" (value judgment), and "X feels X ought to do Y" (statement of psychological fact). It is obvious that just as all mention of the proposer was omitted from the proposition "X is good," when considered by the analyst, so here all mention of the person having the feeling or making the judgment, is omitted from the proposition "X ought to do Y." But upon reflection this last proposition, if it is a value judgment, should be "A judges X ought to do Y" (where the "A" stands for the analyst making the judgment). If the fact of feeling is to be included in the one proposition, the fact of judging is to be included in the other. But what justification is there for assigning

the analyst's proposition the status of "judgment"? Why not *A feels X ought to do Y*? Admittedly, the fact referred to by *A judges X ought to do Y* differs from the fact referred to by *X feels X ought to do Y*—just as it differs from the fact referred to by *A feels X ought to do Y*—but it does not differ in respect of factual reference from "X judges X ought to do Y." There is no difference at all between these respective propositions, except for the difference in personal reference. To appropriate the word "judges" for inclusion only in the proposition expressing the analyst's opinion as regards what X ought to do, is yet another instance of philosophical arbitrariness. The lack of reflection which leads the analyst to exclude himself from the parentheses also leads to the mistaken notion that an essential difference in status can be extended towards the two propositions in question. For once the reference to the analyst is included in the proposition, it becomes evident that there is no reason whatever for interpreting "X ought to do Y" as "A judges X ought to do Y" rather than as "A feels X ought to do Y." Hence, there is no justification for classifying "X ought to do Y" as a value judgment.

It might seem to follow from this that it is impossible even to give an appearance of drawing the supposed distinction between value judgment and statement of psychological fact in respect of propositions which refer to the experiences of one person, and which bear no reference whatever, either explicitly or implicitly, to anyone else. Yet this is not the case. Even where the possibility of confusing personal reference is eliminated, it remains possible, for example, to give the appearance of distinguishing between "I ought to do X" and "I feel I ought to do X," and of classifying these propositions as "value judgment" and "statement of psychological fact" respectively. That this is possible is entirely due to the ambiguity of the word "feels," which may be employed either in the sense of "having a feeling" (which would be its meaning in a statement of psychological fact) or in the sense of "feeling *that*" something or other is the case.<sup>1</sup> Thus, Hare maintains that "I have a feeling that I ought to do X" is a statement of psychological fact, whereas "I ought to do X" is a value judgment. By value judgment he appears to mean the decision a man makes with regard to the "conflicting obligations" (as the deontologists used to call them) with which he is confronted. Hare gives the following example: "A man who has been brought up in an army family, but has become affected by pacifism, may well say 'I have a strong feeling that I ought to fight for my country, but I wonder whether I really ought.'" But surely when a man talks of having a "strong feeling" in such a context, he is using the word

<sup>1</sup> On this distinction, see G. Ryle's article on "Feeling": *Philosophical Quarterly*, April 1951.

"feeling" in the sense of "rather thinking," or of "feeling that" d. ought to do so and so? The natural way to speak about such matter is indicative of this fact, in that it is "feeling that," etc., and no just "feeling." What it expresses is doubt regarding the rectitude of a certain action or principle, not introspection regarding one's sensations. If the man were convinced he ought to fight for his country, nothing further would remain for him to decide. It is not a question of having a "strong feeling" that I ought to fight for my country and another "strong feeling" that I ought to renounce the brutality of war, and discovering by introspection which feeling is the strongest, so that a value judgment is the outcome of conflict between my various feelings. This would amount to the crudest kind of psychological determinism, to which the notion of "value judgment" or indeed judgment of any kind would be singularly inappropriate. When we recognize that "feeling" in this context is "feeling that," these difficulties disappear, and with them the notion of "conflicting obligations" and the absurdity of a situation in which one wonders which of the actions one ought to do, one ought to do. For in saying that "I feel I ought, etc.,," I am not asserting, but denying, that the action in question is obligatory. Even where I say: "I feel *strongly* that I ought to fight for my country," this, at the very most, can only mean that I am almost convinced that I ought to do so. The distance between "I feel I ought to be a pacifist" and "I ought to be a pacifist" is traversed gradually, not by a qualitative leap; and the difference between them is a matter of degree, it is not a difference in kind. Furthermore, when we deny that "I have a feeling I ought, etc.,," is a statement of psychological fact, this is not necessarily to deny that *obligation* might not be a psychological fact, but only to deny that the statement in question is a statement to that effect. It might be argued that, although it is only in the "feeling that" sense of "feeling" that I can say "I have a feeling that I ought," that nevertheless obligation itself is a feeling in the psychological sense of the word "feeling." But even if obligation were in fact a "feeling" in the psychological sense, this would make no difference so far as drawing a distinction between having an obligation and having a "feeling" of obligation is concerned, for in that case "I have a feeling I ought to do X" and "I ought to do X" would be identical statements: "I ought to do X" would be a shorthand way of expressing that I have a certain feeling. Only where "feeling" is employed in the sense of "feeling that" are the two statements distinguishable.

Hare believes that the question: "Wouldn't it be possible for you to feel just like that, although you really oughtn't to do X?" indicates that "I ought to do X" and "I have the feeling I ought to do X" have different meanings. From what has been said, it should be

apparent that the difference is merely in degree. We can just as readily ask a man who says "I ought to do X" whether he may not be mistaken. No one, I hope, is suggesting the infallibility of mankind in such matters. Even the question itself indicates that the statement is not regarded as referring to the psychological feelings or emotions of the person making the statement. We are not asking the man to introspect regarding his feelings, for then the natural question would be: "Do you really have the feeling you ought to do X?" On the other hand, neither are we directing the man's attention to some special sphere of "value judgment" into which he has not yet entered. When we put the question to him as to whether he really ought to do what he has in mind, we are not pulling him away from his psychological preoccupations and getting him to do something else. In short, we are neither asking the man to indulge in introspection nor asking him to do anything different from what he is doing already. What we are doing is to ask him to do a little better, or a little more carefully, what he is already doing.

We are not suggesting here that the ambiguity of the word "feel" could ever of itself give rise to the erroneous classification of "I ought to do X" and "I have a feeling I ought to do X" as referring to different facts. What this ambiguity does, however, is to permit the apparent application to propositions in the first person of the distinction between "value judgment" and "statement of psychological fact." The distinction itself arises out of the failure to reflect. There seems to be no contradiction in my saying that a man feels he ought to do X, and my also saying that he ought not to do X; and this being the case it may seem natural to assume that there is some difference between "feeling" and "having" an obligation. It is from considerations of this order that there arises the notion that there is a qualitative difference between those propositions which include the word "feel" and those which do not. But we have seen that the omission of any mention of feeling with regard to what the analyst thinks someone else ought to do, is the outcome of a failure to reflect, whereas its inclusion with regard to what the analyst thinks he himself ought to do simply indicates a lack of conviction on his part. Once we dispense with the factitious ambiguity of "feeling," and reflect upon these propositions as enunciated by us in connection with our own experience, it becomes obvious that the propositions refer to the same fact. For although such propositions as "X feels he ought to do Y, but he really ought not," "X ought to do Y, but he feels he ought not," etc., do not appear contradictory, this is only because the experiences of two different persons (agent and analyst) are being referred to—the reference to the agent's experience being explicit, that to the analyst's experience, implicit. But, upon

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reflection, such propositions as "I feel I ought not to do X, but I really ought," "I really ought to do X, but I feel I ought not," etc., are contradictory, which would not be the case if "I feel I ought to do X" and "I ought to do X" referred to different kinds of fact.

*University of Liverpool.*

# MOTIVES AND MOTIVATION<sup>1</sup>

R. S. PETERS

## *Introductory*

To probe people's motives is almost an occupational malaise amongst psychologists. And it is not one that can be nursed in private. It intrudes constantly into discussion of acquaintances, into moral assessments of people's actions and their responsibility for them, and into pronouncements on the proper operation of law. On this account psychologists are treated with suspicion, often with derision and resentment, by their academic colleagues. Of course, like Jehovah's witnesses, they come to expect, even to relish, the reception they receive. For has it not been written that we all have a strong resistance to such revelations, our real motives being often those which we are ashamed to admit? But there may be good grounds for this resistance as well as psychological explanations of it. My hope in this paper is to set out the sorts of grounds that there may be for our resistance to this scrutiny of our motives and to the theories of motivation which lend some kind of scientific respectability to it.

### *I. The term "motive" in ordinary language*

One of the contributions of modern analytic philosophy has been to point out the troubles that can be generated if a term which has a well-established use in ordinary language acquires also a technical use and the technical meaning insinuates itself into everyday contexts. Yet no one, to my knowledge, has brought out the shock to ordinary language occasioned by the psychologist's search for motives. Of course, what we call "ordinary language" is the repository of crude and often outworn theories; and it is because the language used by psychologists has led so many of us to look at our actions in a new way and even to consider revising some of our most resolute common-sense convictions, that it is worth while dwelling on what may seem to be at first only a matter of terminology.

There are, so it seems, three main conditions which limit the use of the term "motive" in ordinary language. Firstly I would suggest that those uncorrupted by much contact with psychologists only speak of people's motives in contexts where there is some question of assessing their conduct.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, when the motive is asked for

<sup>1</sup> This paper was read to the Alexander Society at Manchester in March 1955 and to post-graduate seminars at Birkbeck College and the London School of Economics. The author wishes to acknowledge such criticisms or comments as have led to alteration of the original paper.

<sup>2</sup> I made this point in a previous paper but did not develop it. See R. Peters, *Motives and Causes*, Proc. Arist. Soc. Supp. Vol. XXVI, 1952, p. 145.

in such a context, it states the *reason* which the agent had for *departing from an established expectation*. Thirdly the motive is not merely a reason but the *conclusive reason* which actually "moved" him to act. I now propose to examine these three conditions and their relevance to the psychologist's use of the term "motive."

The first two conditions can be treated together, as questions of assessment usually arise when some breach of an established expectation has occurred. The term "motive" is surely used widely in moral and legal discourse which are concerned entirely with assessment. We "asccribe" or "impute" motives to others and "avow" or "confess" them in ourselves. But we only do this when a breach with an established expectation has occurred and there is a need to *justify* an action. Motives are then unearthed as reasons which the agent had for the action. The reason states the objective of the action, the state of affairs aimed at. But not all reasons are motives, in spite of the philosophical fashion of equating them. I have heard a philosopher say, for instance, "What was his motive for saying that everything was made of water?" This sounds quaint, almost indecent, simply because it carries with it the suggestion that Thales was somehow to *blame* for his metaphysical tour-de-force.

This restriction of the term "motive" to situations where a justification is required for a breach with established expectation explains our sense of outrage when a psychologist gets busy on our motives. We do not mind if he asks our motives for stealing his silver or burning his book, but we wince when he asks about our motives for getting married, playing chess, and giving people Christmas presents. In his own mind he may well be searching for the springs of our conduct which may be hidden to us; but in our minds he is sowing the suggestion that what we are doing is not normally done and that we may be up to no good. This is particularly apparent in relation to psycho-analytic theory. For when Freud suggested that *all* actions have motives, he was in effect casting aspersions on everything that we do. The use of the term "ulterior motive," when used indiscriminately about all our actions, has the effect of *blaming* equally smoking a pipe and stealing silver. Of course we know that psycho-analysts are only too concerned to withhold blame; they wish merely to understand and to cure. But by indiscriminate use of the term "motive" they have either suggested that we are to blame for everything that we do or, in the minds of the very sophisticated, that we are to blame for nothing. Is not the ordinary man, then, on solid ground in resisting such verbal impropriety?

Could it not be the case, too, that we dislike suggestions about our *unconscious* motives not simply because of our resistance to the revelation of wishes which our shame has prompted us to repress, but also because the coupling of the term "motive" with "uncon-

"conscious" suggests that we are up to no good and don't know it. This is an unnerving aspersion on our conduct. It makes us feel insecure, at the mercy of unknown forces; and our feeling of insecurity reinforces the resistance to the psychologist's probings which is explained by his theory. It has also, amongst those who have dabbled in Freud, a somewhat comical consequence of multiplying the occasions for blame. A wife might previously have been irritated and slightly hurt by her husband's forgetfulness of the anniversary of their wedding. But now that she has read some Freud she gives vent to her indignation as well as to her irritation; for his conduct reveals that he *really* wishes that they had never married. Fits of forgetfulness come to seem like intentional insults. And, of course, in some respects they may be. But in other respects they quite obviously are not, and the indiscriminate use of the term "motive" has had the unfortunate effect of blurring distinctions which are essential for practical life.

The third condition for the use of the term "motive" explains its connexion with hidden springs, unrelieved tensions, and all the other psychological box of tricks which I shall shortly open up when I consider the use of the term "motivation." For when we produce the motive for an action we are not just suggesting a reason which the agent had for it; we are claiming that the reason adduced in fact states the objective actually aimed at, the one that "moves" the agent to act. Further probing about the action is *ipso facto* rendered pointless once we have committed ourselves to a statement of its motive. What counts as a motive, therefore, depends upon the assumptions of the group with which the prober identifies himself, on what are regarded as convincing reasons for departing from established expectations. In our culture hunger, sex, and desire for profit are typical motives; for objectives are indicated that everyone is presumed to have.

This third condition delimiting the use of the term "motive" is quite consistent with the use of the rather sinister phrase "But what was his *real* motive?" For it is notorious that we give different justifications of actions to different people. The opportunities for this in a complex and highly differentiated society are enormous. To his sophisticated colleagues a solicitor may justify his strange behaviour in taking up tennis when he is 40 by confessing that his motive is to get clients from the Club; to his wife he may plead that he is doing it in order to get exercise; but only to his bosom friend in his cups will he admit that his "real" motive is amorous adventure. Is the "real" motive anything more than the reason that seems to him conclusive in a cool hour or which he would confess to a friend in a less cool one? Our personalities are like concentric rings of loyalties. "Real" motives are those which we are prepared to admit

to people on the inner circle. Psycho-analysts specialize in "real" motives; for, as the well-known jibe puts it, they have the professional monopoly of being the last people that we speak with on terms of intimacy and sincerity before we speak only with ourselves. And they have very definite views about the reasons which alone are sufficient to account for people's actions. They spread their convictions on these matters to those who admit them to their inner sanctum. This they call offering "interpretations," which is a process of offering reasons which seem to them conclusive for people's actions in the place of reasons which seem conclusive to their patients—and, incidentally, to the majority of their fellow mortals. Things are not always what they seem. What they *really* are depends on the assumptions which we take for granted.

But, it might be said, what is it about these objectives or reasons which make them conclusive? I have suggested only that the *logical force* of the term "motive" is to state a *conclusive* reason. Is it sufficient to leave it at that? Etymologically the term "motive" suggests "moving" to action. Is not the motive our actual objective because of a causal connexion between picturing the objective and some inner springs of conduct? If "motive" means the reason which the agent has for the action which states the actual objective aimed at, whatever the appearances, has it not this concrete status because the agent is pushed or moved towards this objective by some inner mechanism?

Whether or not, in ordinary language, there is this necessary connexion between the motive for an action and its inner springs, I would not like to say. I am inclined to say that people who have become familiar with psychological theories are inclined to regard such a connexion as necessary but that, in ordinary language, there is no such definite commitment. It is tempting to suggest that the logical force of the term in ordinary language has been given a psychological interpretation in terms of current theories. Some of these theories have found their way into common-sense assumptions; so it is now impossible to dogmatize on whether or not such a necessary connexion is assumed. But certainly psychologists have given a causal interpretation of the logical force of the term "motive." And, unfortunately, many of them have relied on the old mechanistic model of the efficient cause, with rather unfruitful results for their theories as well as with unhelpful effects on common-sense assumptions. And this is what I now wish to show.

## 2. *The psychologist's motives*

A few examples of psychological theory will illustrate my point. Bentham, for instance, held that a motive was "a pleasure, pain, or other event, that prompts to action."<sup>1</sup> It must be previous to the

<sup>1</sup> J. Bentham, *Principles of Morals and Legislation* (Blackwell, 1948), p. 216.

action but must also look to the consequences of the action before the pleasure or pain which gives birth to it can be felt. The motive of a man who rushes out to put out his neighbour's fire is the pain felt at the thought of being burnt. The pain and the expectation are so intimately connected as to be, for practicable purposes, indistinguishable. Bentham then goes on to catalogue the different motives which correspond to different pleasures and pains. Mill, too, in his famous attempt to distinguish motives from intentions,<sup>1</sup> claimed that a motive involves an antecedent feeling which initiates an action. This became a very common notion amongst psychologists. Freud, for instance, regarded the "wish" as an emotively charged idea, which acted as a kind of irritant, initiating action. It was easy for his wishes, whether conscious or unconscious, to become equated with motives. McDougall, too, used the term "motive" in a similar sense. A man's intention in putting his hand in his pocket may be obvious enough. He intends to give a coin to a beggar. But what is his motive? Did he do it because he was afraid, moved to pity, or because he liked to feel superior to others? McDougall equated motives with emotions like pride, fear, and pity.<sup>2</sup> Thus amongst those psychologists who did not frown on introspection, motives came to be regarded as emotively charged reasons which a person has for doing some things rather than others. The directedness of the behaviour comes about because there is an emotive charge which fires one reason rather than another, and thus directs behaviour towards its goal. It thus becomes legitimate for a psychologist to ask for the motives for any action. For a motive is no longer, as in ordinary language, just a reason that seems conclusive for departing from established expectations. It is an emotively charged reason for doing anything whatever—getting up in the morning, reading the paper, or attending a seminar. No wonder the ordinary academic is shocked by his psychological colleagues. For the term is now used indiscriminately in any context and the logical force of the term has been given a highly speculative psychological rendering.

But, it will be said, feelings are no longer fashionable in psychology. Did not Tolman say that "raw feels" do not get across? The instinct theory, too, which was associated amongst other things with the postulation of distinct emotions for each instinct, has been superseded by less metaphysical theories of motivation. Perhaps so; but most theories of motivation, which ousted the motives of the old psychologists, in fact preserved the model of the initiating push but gave it a more palpable and tough-minded interpretation. The notion of "drive" was foisted on to psychology and linked indis-

<sup>1</sup> See J. S. Mill, *Utilitarianism* (Longman, Green and Co., London, 1888), p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> W. McDougall, *Outline of Psychology* (Methuen, 1928), p. 122.

solubly with the concept of "motivation." Initiating conditions of "drive" came to take the place of initiating states of emotion. P. T. Young, after distinguishing at least five ways in which the term "drive" was used, recommended that it should be reserved for a persistent stimulus which liberates energy, like that of a contracting stomach or of a physico-chemical state which changes the excitability of the nerve cells.<sup>1</sup> Some theories of motivation actually use the term "motive." To quote one example: "Motive, like the non-technical terms 'want' and 'desire,' is a word which points both inward and outward. Such terms refer both to an inner state of dissatisfaction (or unrest, or tension, or disequilibrium) and to something in the environment (like food, mother's presence, or the solution to a puzzle) which serves to remove the state of dissatisfaction.... Motive, as here used, refers to a state of the organism in which bodily energy is mobilized and selectively directed towards parts of the environment."<sup>2</sup> Two factors are incorporated in this definition, firstly the drives or bodily states felt as restlessness, which initiate tendencies towards activity and which function "like motors here and there within the body, each delivering energy to appropriate muscles and glands." These may or may not be felt as discomfort but they *impel* the organism to activity. Secondly, there is the *directedness* of behaviour towards a goal. An organism is motivated, says Newcomb, "when—and only when—it is characterized both by a state of drive and by a direction of behaviour towards some goal which is selected in preference to all other possible goals. Motive, then, is a concept which joins together drive and goal."<sup>3</sup> This linking of the concept of motivation with that of "drive" is so widespread that the recent Nebraska symposium on "Current Theory and Research in Motivation" is almost entirely concerned with the nature and operation of "drives." Often the terms "motive" and "drive" are used interchangeably. "An examination of contemporary discussions of motivation," says J. S. Brown "suggests that one of the major sources of misunderstanding is the failure of most writers to distinguish clearly between drives or motives, on the one hand, and habits or reaction tendencies on the other."<sup>4</sup> This typifies the extent of the shift in the use of the term "motive."

In modern theories of "motivation," then, the goal-directedness of behaviour is linked with initiating conditions of drive. This is the modern rendering of the conception of "motive" which we found in

<sup>1</sup> P. T. Young, *Emotion in Man and Animals*, (New York, 1943), p. 151.

<sup>2</sup> T. H. Newcomb, *Social Psychology* (Dryden Press, New York, 1950), pp. 80, 81.

<sup>3</sup> Op. cit., p. 82.

<sup>4</sup> J. S. Brown, *Problems presented by the Concept of Acquired Drive, Current Theory and Research in Motivation, A Symposium* (University of Nebraska Press, 1953), p. 2.

the earlier psychologists, where persistence towards a goal was linked with antecedent feelings which were thought to initiate the movements. Nowadays, palpable goings on like contractions of the stomach have replaced the indeterminate hankerings of the old theories. But the shock to common-sense beliefs is, if anything, even more severe. For the term "drive" suggests an even more violent thrust as an efficient cause of the action than was suggested in the old notion of ideas with an emotive charge. Of course, scientists can use any terms they like provided that they define them. But surely they should avoid using terms which have such misleading associations. For the suggestion of the term "drive" is that the initiating conditions of action *impel* us to act and render the action *unavoidable*. It is doubtful whether there is this compulsiveness about actions initiated by the basic biological "drives." How much more doubtful is it that there is any such compulsiveness at all about actions initiated by the so-called "acquired drives." It is plausible to say that a man who has been starved for a long period is "driven" towards a beef-steak; but what a word to use for the pursuit of money, praise, prestige, and so on.<sup>1</sup>

There might, indeed, be more excuse for the use of such a suggestive term as "drive" if the facts suggested by it were better authenticated. But in the case of the so-called "acquired drives" it is notorious that the facts are far from clear. For where are the palpable initiating conditions for most of our goal-directed activities? To quote J. S. Brown: "Perhaps the greatest hindrance to progress lies in assuming the existence of drives where no such assumption need be made. We might advance more rapidly if we were to start afresh and deny at the outset that each and every object or situation for which an organism has learnt to strive must be accompanied by a characteristic acquired drive for that object."<sup>2</sup> Or, as Newcomb rather charmingly puts it: "We do not have the means, for example, of distinguishing between the drive states of a given individual when he is motivated to win at poker and when he is motivated to win at tennis. The goals can easily be distinguished, but the drives can not."<sup>3</sup> Why, then, should it be assumed that they exist? And why use such a suggestive word as "drive" to refer to them?

Indeed the concept of the "acquired drive" has all those characteristics of an *ad hoc* hypothesis, for which the old instinct theory was castigated by its tough-minded opponents. It is firstly an untested and improbable hypothesis that all goal-directed behaviour is preceded by such states of drive. Secondly, the suggestion looks suspiciously like a rehash of the old faculty psychology in pseudo-

<sup>1</sup> See Symposium, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> T. H. Newcomb, op. cit., p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> Symposium, p. 12.

scientific trappings, a specific initiating state of tension being postulated for each specific type of goal-directed behaviour. Thirdly, as a hypothesis, it is theoretically trivial; for it amounts to little more than using a mechanical model to *classify* the various types of goal-directed behaviour.

The merit of the notion of "drive" when it was used in its early days (e.g. by Tolman in his conception of "first-order drives")<sup>1</sup> was that it did attempt to single out those of the old instincts which could plausibly be said to involve some definite initiating physiological conditions—e.g. hunger, thirst elimination—which were altered or reduced to "quiescence" by the goal-directed behaviour. This physiological interpretation of "need-reduction" is particularly obvious in Hull's theory where special internal stimuli connected with "needs" are brought in to supplement the stimulus-response theory. When the organism persists towards some goals, these needs are reduced and the internal stimulation abates. Thus, some S-R connexions rather than others are strengthened and behaviour becomes organized towards goals. In other words, the postulation of specific initiating conditions for goal-directed behaviour was tied to a definite physiological theory of homeostasis, developed by Cannon and others. It may well be that the theory was wrong; for it has been shown that goal-directed behaviour in both eating and drinking, and in sexual and maternal behaviour, can proceed without the occurrence of the antecedent extra-neural irritants postulated by drive theorists.<sup>2</sup> There are also many difficulties about the postulation of end-states of physiological quiescence.<sup>3</sup> But, at any rate, the conception of drives in its early days was linked with a definite and testable physiological theory. The derivative suggestion, however, of "acquired drives" has not even the merit of being refutable by physiological evidence.

It is perfectly true that the term "drive" has been used by some psychologists (e.g. Tolman and Hull) as an intervening variable rather than as a term describing definite initiating states or irritants. It functions as a hypothetical construct in these theories by means of which variations in persistence towards a goal can be described as functionally dependent on antecedent conditions like changes in food schedules, chemical changes, and so on, rather than on variations in incentives—e.g. size or nearness of goal objects. And certainly some such concept is necessary. But the trouble with the term "drive" as a generic concept is that it obscures the important

<sup>1</sup> E. Tolman, *Purposive Behaviour in Animals and Men* (New York, 1932), pp. 276-81.

<sup>2</sup> See D. O. Hebb, *The Organization of Behaviour* (New York, 1949), p. 172.

<sup>3</sup> See C. T. Morgan and E. Stellar, *Physiological Psychology*, New York, 1950, p. 387.

differences between these antecedent conditions by lumping them together under the umbrella of a misleading model. For it suggests that all antecedently energized activity approximates to one pattern; whereas the vital point to stress is the difference in persistence towards a goal brought about by different antecedent conditions. H. W. Nissen exposes the "very old and still prevalent superstition, inherent in the very word 'drive,' that the organism is driven and guided to certain external goals, such as money or murder, by a mysterious force or homunculus who sits somewhere inside, preferably in the heart or brain." The drive, he says, ". . . is merely the collective sensitization of a constellation of acts which are related in so far as they tend to produce a certain alternation in the organism or in one of its relationships to the environment."<sup>1</sup> Why, then, in view of misunderstandings which are admitted to be still current, even amongst psychologists, should the term "drive" be retained? Why not speak simply of "sensitization?" Nissen, it is true, pours scorn on the story of "acquired drives."<sup>2</sup> But even if we are dealing only with biogenic drives which are "an inferred influence of bodily states on response thresholds . . . which are related, through consummatory acts or their consequences, to those bodily states,"<sup>3</sup> is the sensitivity to certain stimuli brought about by hormones circulating in the blood-stream sufficiently similar to that brought about by variations in past experience to warrant the description of "drive" for both conditions?<sup>4</sup> Could it not be that the omnibus term "drive" conceals many very important differences as well as perpetuating an age old superstition?

Many, like Hebb, see the difficulties in drive theories and prefer not to link the concept of "motivation" indissolubly with that of "drive." Hebb suggests that goal-directed behaviour is preceded by some central "motive-state," an organized phase sequence in the cells of the brain. But so, according to his theory, are *all* voluntary activities, a voluntary act being "one that is determined by a phase sequence or conceptual series with some duration in time, to which both sensory and central facilitations contribute constantly."<sup>5</sup> What is distinctive about *motivated* behaviour is the direction and persistence in a given direction of the activity so initiated.<sup>6</sup> In other words, whatever the merits of the physiological speculation, it is the *directedness* and *persistence* of motivated behaviour which is its crucial characteristic, not its presumed initiation by highly speculative drives. And, as has been suggested, the ordinary use of the term "motive" brings out the directedness

<sup>1</sup> H. W. Nissen, *The Nature of the Drive as Innate Determinant of Behavioral Organization*, Nebraska Symposium on Motivation, 1954, pp. 308-9.

<sup>2</sup> See 1954 Symposium, p. 309 seq. <sup>3</sup> Op. cit., p. 317. <sup>4</sup> Op. cit., p. 286.

<sup>5</sup> D. O. Hebb, op. cit., p. 144.

<sup>6</sup> Op. cit., p. 181.

of behaviour towards a goal; it leaves open the nature of its initiating conditions.

Surely, too, it is the directedness of behaviour which is stressed in the theory of "unconscious motives" rather than its initiating conditions. Freud's great contribution lay in suggesting that behaviour often persists towards goals of which the patient is unaware, which he does not envisage as conscious objectives. The causal part of his theory is concerned with the *antecedent* conditions in childhood which, through the mechanism of repression, set up such blind directedness. It is not much concerned with the initiating conditions of drive which set off behaviour in the present, though there may well be such conditions of generalized restlessness and tension.

There are thus good theoretical grounds for insisting that the directedness of behaviour, rather than its initiating conditions, is the crucial aspect of it which is referred to when we assign a motive. Ordinary language is here on the side of the angels. It is also supported by certain practical considerations which show how irrelevant psychological theories of initiating conditions are to most of our practical transactions and judgments. This must now be briefly brought out.

### 3. Motivation and social science

Most of us, who are not professional psychologists, have a practical purpose in wishing to understand and explain human action. And it is interesting to consider why it is that the social sciences like anthropology, sociology, and economics usually seem so much more illuminating to us than current theories of motivation. These sciences take goal-directed actions as their basic units and construct their classifications and generalizations without enquiring into the motives of men in the psychologist's sense. Social scientists often refer to such explanations as implying the category of "rationality." To quote an example:

"The concept of rationality, much used in sociological and anthropological literature, requires some comment. It is here taken to mean purposiveness plus something else, namely, the fact that the steps taken to achieve the purposive appear by their nature appropriate and empirically sound. We ascribe rationality to sequences of behaviour if they are analyzable in terms of means and ends, more precisely in terms of an intrinsic appropriateness of means to ends of which the actors are aware and which the observer, drawing on his empirical knowledge, can discern and verify. Pareto speaks in the same sense—with a somewhat unhappy choice of terms—of 'logical' actions, that is, actions 'logically' united towards an end from the point of view of the actor as well as the observer and his wider knowledge."<sup>1</sup>

Thus explanations in social science consist largely in giving the reasons for actions by showing the end towards which they are

<sup>1</sup> S. Nadel, *The Foundations of Social Anthropology* (London, 1951), pp. 266-7.

consciously directed. This can be done at varying levels of generality. For instance, a man could be taking certain steps in order to obtain another wife and in order to promote certain more general ends like increasing the population or the cultivation of the land.

The social scientist is also particularly concerned with making generalizations about the unintended consequences of such rational actions<sup>1</sup>—e.g. if people aim at raising the level of education in a community, the suicide rate also goes up. An economist, similarly, may show us that we cannot have both full employment and the absence of inflation as compatible objectives, or a sociologist may reveal how changes in the techniques of production bring about characteristic changes in social structure. These generalizations assume conscious objectives and show us the *unintended consequences* of their pursuit. Similarly the comparative studies of the anthropologist help us to understand more about the compatibility of the pursuit of various possible goals. And, from a practical point of view, if we are thinking about social policy, it is immensely important for us to know what the unintended consequences of certain policies are likely to be—e.g. equality of status for women, efficient medical services, and so on. Indeed, many like Popper<sup>2</sup> urge that the laws of social science should be stated in the form of generalizations about the sorts of things that can't be done without something else happening.

Where, then, is the need for theories of motivation? For, from a practical point of view, it does not much matter what states of mind or body initiate or "drive" actions like putting a house up for sale or introducing atomic energy into industry. The objective, the means which can lead up to it, and the information available to the agent, are what matter—what Popper calls "the logic of the situation."<sup>3</sup> Theories of motivation are relevant only if, like the old theory of instincts or the Freudian theory of infantile sexuality, they tell us that our physiology or social training is of such a kind that, whatever our cultural environment, we *must* seek certain objectives, however much we may disguise them. But in such cases the psychologist offers causal laws deducible from a theory. He says little, if anything, of "drives" in the sense of initiating states, which, like the old efficient cause, push behaviour towards its goal.

This theory of "drives" is singularly unhelpful, too, in the other sort of case where the social scientist is ready to admit the need of a psychological theory of motivation—the case of irrational action. For it is usually held that we need only ask for the causes of an action

<sup>1</sup> See, e.g. F. Hayek, *Individualism and Economic Order* (London, 1949), Ch. I.

<sup>2</sup> K. R. Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism*, *Economica*, Vol. II, p. 121.

<sup>3</sup> K. R. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (London, 1947), Vol. II, p. 90.

when it seems to have no reasons, or when a person does something quite contrary to or inconsistent with his intentions. Max Weber held a view of this sort. To quote him:

“... the rational deliberation of an actor as to whether the results of a given proposed course of action will or will not promote certain specific interests, and the corresponding decision, do not become one bit more understandable by taking ‘psychological’ considerations into account. But it is precisely on the basis of such rational assumptions that most of the laws of sociology, including those of economics, are built up. On the other hand, in explaining the irrationalities of action sociologically, that form of psychology which employs the method of subjective understanding undoubtedly can make decisively important contributions.”<sup>1</sup>

Ryle voices similar convictions of common sense when he says:

“We know quite well why John Doe scowled and slammed the door. He had been insulted. We know quite well why the heroine took one of her morning letters to read in solitude, for the novelist gives us the required causal explanation. The heroine recognized her lover’s handwriting on the envelope. The schoolboy knows quite well what made him write down the answer ‘225’ when asked for the square of 15. . . . On the other hand there are plenty of kinds of behaviour of which we can give no such explanations. I do not know why I was so tongue-tied in the presence of a certain acquaintance; why I dreamed a certain dream last night; why I suddenly saw in my mind’s eye an uninteresting street corner of a town that I hardly knew; why I chatter more rapidly after the air-raid siren is heard; or how I came to address a friend by the wrong Christian name. We recognize that questions of these kinds are genuine psychological questions.”<sup>2</sup>

Psychological explanations, like the gods in Homer, have to be summoned to account for odd states of mind which seem to be almost thrust upon us. Ryle gives no explicit criterion for what makes a question genuinely psychological. But the examples he gives suggest that he has in mind actions which are hardly actions at all in the sense that they are acts without any point or reason. They therefore seem to need a special causal theory, such as that provided by psychologists, to explain them. For common-sense explanation in terms of conscious objectives or the logic of the situation cannot deal with such cases. There are other cases, too, where actions are carried out contrary to our intentions (like being rude to someone whom we want to please) or where we are unable to take the means necessary to attain our objectives (like beginning to feel faint when presented with an opportunity of taking our opponent’s queen at chess). For all such cases the causal explanations of the psychologist in terms of unconscious motives seem peculiarly relevant and convincing. Rational behaviour is, as it were, taken as the norm, and deviations from the norm are explained as a function of a variety of social or physiological conditions.

<sup>1</sup> M. Weber, *Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (Ed. Parsons, London, 1947), p. 99.

<sup>2</sup> G. Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (London, 1949), pp. 325–6.

But it is not the "drive" theory that helps us here. For even in such cases of irrational behaviour, where it might be appropriate to describe people as "driven" to act, it is not usually the *initiating* conditions of drive which it is important to know about, but the *antecedent* conditions—perhaps in early childhood—which set up such irrational behaviour. For knowledge of such antecedent conditions enables us to take steps to avoid recurrences of irrationality. A psycho-analyst is bound, for therapeutic purposes, to be very much interested in the unconscious motives and fantasies which the patient now has, which are revealed partly, perhaps, in the tension experienced before the pursuit of certain goals of which the patient is not conscious. For therapeutic purposes he may not worry much whether a patient's report of a childhood experience is a fantasy or a reliable record. But the social scientist, who may wish to intervene to avoid the later need of a psycho-analyst, is vitally interested in whether there is in fact a correlation between actual childhood experiences and the later development of certain adult traits. For his practical purposes, therefore, rigorous attempts to establish causal connexions between, for example, the ways in which a child reacts to the frustrations of weaning and potting and later traits like hoarding, petulance, sadism, and so on, would be most welcome. The practical man, who is just as much interested in prevention as in cure, is much more willing to take seriously such fascinating speculations about antecedent conditions than stories of acquired motives, involving highly speculating initiating conditions of "drive."

#### 4. Motivation and morality.

Similar conclusions emerge, too, if we consider another practical sphere—that of moral or legal judgment. Here again, what we have to discover is the objective of the agent, the goal at which he consciously aims. This is usually called the motive in ordinary language if we are suggesting a convincing objective which accounts for the departure from a norm or established expectation. But it is quite irrelevant for practical purposes of assessment to unearth the motive in the psychologist's sense which involves not just the objective but also the initiating conditions of the action. A man may jump into a river to save someone from drowning because of a need for social approval. But unless he acts *in order to* obtain social approval, the psychologist's story is irrelevant. We do not give people moral marks for their unconscious needs. The psychologist's explanations are only relevant in such contexts if he can show us, for instance, the conditions which render impulses *irresistible*—assuming that we know what "irresistible" means! For under such conditions the degree of responsibility for the action is decreased. An example would be the

suggestion by Bowlby that "lack of opportunity for forming an attachment to a mother-figure during the first three years," or "deprivation for a limited period—at least six months and probably more than six—during the first three or four years" (of maternal care) not only causes traits like "unfriendliness," "distractability" and "lack of self-inhibition"<sup>1</sup> but also acts as an *irremediable* determinant, in that there seems to be no further social training that will remedy the effect of this early deprivation. I have no idea whether Bowlby's claims are true; but if they are true, they would be theoretically as well as practically very important. For he would have discovered not merely the causes of certain types of action, but causes of such a sort as to render these types of action *unavoidable* within a given range of circumstances. Apart from the theoretical relevance of such discoveries to the issue of free-will, further knowledge about the categories of antecedent conditions which bring about such examples of unavoidable behaviour would be most welcome for practical purposes, as it is very relevant to our estimates of responsibility.

But here again it is the antecedent conditions rather than the initiating conditions of "drive" which it is important to unearth. Indeed theories of "drives" only mislead us in that they suggest that all motivated behaviour falls into this unusual pattern. *What is needed instead is a better knowledge of those conditions under which a person can properly be said to be "driven" to act.* And these are only a small selection from those conditions under which his behaviour can be said to be "motivated." The trouble, however, has been that the widespread interest created by psychologists in motives, in their sense, has led people not only to concentrate more on the causes of action than on what reasons are good reasons for acting in some ways rather than others; but it has also led people to suppose quite erroneously that whenever the causes of an action can be unearthed, then people are not responsible for what they do. Many nice people begin to doubt the value of their efforts once they become wise to the causes suggested for them. They also come to think that they are not responsible either for their achievements or for their back-slidings. This belief in "psychic determinism" rests, if it is true, simply on confusing finding causes for an action with finding causes of such a sort as to render the action unavoidable. But my suggestion is that this muddle can only be perpetuated by theories of "drives," the terminology of which suggests that in all cases where we have a motive to act, we are somehow impelled or driven to act.

BIRKBECK COLLEGE  
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.

<sup>1</sup> J. Bowlby, *Maternal Care and Mental Health* (Geneva, 1951), p. 47.  
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## KNOWLEDGE AND FAITH

MAUD BODKIN

"WE have but faith: we cannot know; For knowledge is of things we see." So Tennyson wrote in the nineteenth century, using the same distinction that in the first of our era Paul the Apostle used, writing to his converts of the walking by faith that looks not to the things seen and temporal, but to the things eternal and unseen. (2 Cor. iv. 18, v. 7.)

If we consider the contexts of these two passages we find, I think, an implicit contrast of faith with two differing concepts of knowledge. When St. Paul writes triumphantly of the inward man renewed through faith in the eternal things, careless of the sufferings of the outward man through the vicissitudes of things temporal, he barely glances, with a kind of contempt, at that knowledge "of the things we see" that has become chief object of the contrast with faith in the thought of Tennyson. When, continuing his discourse, St. Paul speaks again of faith, there is, as in Tennyson's thought, a note of privation in the word. While "at home in the body" and "absent from the Lord," Paul, like Tennyson, recognizes "we have but faith": in his own words, "we know in part," "see in a glass darkly," waiting for release into participation with the true Divine knowledge: "then shall we know even as we are known" (1 Cor. xiii. 12).

In the centuries that lie between St. Paul's contrast of faith and knowledge and that which finds expression in Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, the work of scientists, directed upon the things we see, had conferred upon knowledge of these a status in men's thoughts very different from that St. Paul would assume in communication with his converts. The vicissitudes of the body and tyranny of the senses that Paul could despise must indeed have had powerful hold upon many of his converts, but there was then no such strongly organized knowledge of things seen and temporal as in Tennyson's time could daunt those who would gladly have affirmed as knowledge their intimations of things unseen.

Not that the new power of the scientific concept of knowledge had banished entirely from Tennyson's thought concerning faith that other concept of knowledge that had meant so much to St. Paul and to those who fed on his thought in the earlier ages of our era. The ideal of a Divine knowledge that looks "through and through" the self in its inner active being, its striving and failing, is present in Tennyson's thought as he recalls the unrivalled joys of communication, in mutual love, with the mind he recognized as enlightening his own, and strained to follow that mind in its conceived further growth toward God-likeness, beyond death.

Yet it is not chiefly as an expression of faith, and of faith's ideal of knowledge, that we value *In Memoriam*. This poem, T. S. Eliot has said, is "religious" not through its faith, but "because of the quality of its doubt."<sup>1</sup> If our concern with the poem is for its expression of a certain attitude characteristic of its time, that attitude can, I think, be recognized especially in the passages that speak of the incongruity between "nature" as the scientist views it, and human faith in a loving Creator-God. Tennyson wrote of man,

"Who trusted God was love indeed,  
And love Creation's final law—  
Tho' nature, red in tooth and claw  
With ravine, shriek'd against his creed—"

The doubt the poem expresses, Eliot writes, "is a very intense experience." Its intensity suggests, I think, the shock of a new awareness, as if the thinkers who used the idea of design in nature as an argument for a loving Creator had never looked steadily at the interactions going on in nature, till Darwin and others began to formulate these with comprehensive accuracy.<sup>2</sup>

(2) The philosopher who today maintains faith in a God of love, and attempts some reflective justification of his faith, finds his task no easier for all that has happened in the worlds of thought and action since Tennyson's time. In the world of public action the kinship of man with the beast of prey has become more than ever apparent. We have seen how the instincts of the beast can grow to demonic exorbitance when penetrated by human intelligence divorced from human tenderness. In the world of public thought, the extension to every province of the impersonal, objective methods of science has exercised on some minds a kind of intimidation. A philosophic thinker so affected may feel, as Karl Jaspers has said, that communication has been broken off with those who in other ages within the philosophic tradition could believe strongly in things unseen, and venture their lives upon their faith.<sup>3</sup>

In this predicament one line of reflection that seems worth following is the attempt to understand more deeply—and so perhaps to justify—faith and faith's ideal of knowledge, through the study of these, in their contrast with the ideal of knowledge that inspires the scientist.

Making such an attempt, Professor Jaspers has offered a character-

<sup>1</sup> *Essays Ancient and Modern* (Faber, 1936), p. 187.

<sup>2</sup> St. Paul had perhaps looked with sympathy at these interactions when he wrote of the whole creation that groans and travails waiting for redemption, so also the earlier writer who dreamed of a holy condition when lambs would no longer suffer, mangled by lions; but in later centuries men seemed almost to lose the power of looking upon nature directly with sympathy for the inner lives of the creatures.

<sup>3</sup> *The Perennial Scope of Philosophy*, by Karl Jaspers, trans. Ralph Manheim (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1950), pp. 9–10.

ization of the faith of those saints of philosophy, Socrates, Boethius, Bruno, who vindicated their faith "after the manner of martyrs." The faith of these men, he says, was in a truth with which they were so personally identified as to be ready to die for its sake. He contrasts that scientific truth for which Galileo, threatened like Bruno by the Inquisition, rightly would not die. Galileo's retractation was of a truth objectively valid, verifiable in time by all men, needing no witness of a dedicated and surrendered life. The truth for which these philosophic martyrs died was not thus objective, verifiable, but for them, each in his historic situation, it was a truth commanding, absolute.<sup>1</sup>

"I will obey heaven rather than you," Socrates is reported by Plato to have said, standing before his judges. "I have no other business than to go about persuading you all to care less for your bodies and your wealth than for the perfection of your souls. . . . I shall not change my ways though I were to die a thousand deaths."

The content of this commanding faith of Socrates in the perfecting of the soul we can gather only approximately from a study of his whole life and thought as we have it presented, chiefly, by Plato. Professor Cornford has summed up "the Socratic philosophy" as "a reaction from the materialistic drift of physical science" as studied by the Ionian philosophers. Socrates was inviting men to cease from pursuit either of material gain or of knowledge of the material world, and to turn their eyes "inwards to the nature of the human soul." This exhortation, Professor Cornford has noted, would appear strange to the ordinary Athenian who seems to have thought of his soul "as an airy unsubstantial wraith or double of his body" that would flit at death to a realm equally negative. To care supremely for such a soul, he might well think, would be to cherish a mere shadow of himself.<sup>2</sup>

(3) If, for a moment, we dwell on this thought of Socrates preaching a new concept of the soul to men whose inherited outlook on the world made nonsense of his message, we recognize a controversy that continues into the present hour. How are we to think and speak of the soul in relation to the bodies we see and touch? We speak of looking inwards to find it; we speak of the soul "inhabiting" the body—in St. Paul's speech, its "earthly tabernacle." If these phrases seem as nonsensical to some thinkers of our time as Socrates' valuation of the soul may have seemed to many of his hearers, can we reinterpret our metaphors, to avoid the confusion, the "category mistake," to which it seems our speech invites us? The primitive Greek image described by Cornford as a wraith or double of the body can certainly be understood as such a mistake. It presented the soul as another

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., p. 210.

<sup>2</sup> Before and After Socrates by F. M. Cornford (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1932), pp. 27-8, 50.

material thing added to things seen and handled, though in some puzzling way lacking their sensible character. But for this unreal image Socrates, and after him Plato, sought to substitute a conception more significant; and today the question is still with us whether we can give an account of the soul, and of unseen spiritual reality to which the soul is akin, that shall be clear of such confusion and shall make the speech both of Socrates and of St. Paul intelligible to us, establishing true communication between us and them.

Let us consider this metaphor of inner and outer that recurs so persistently when we today, or writers far back in the religious and philosophic tradition, speak of the mind or soul. "Though our outward man is decaying," St. Paul wrote, after telling of bodily sufferings willingly endured in his ministry, "yet our inward man is renewed day by day"—renewed through communion with the Divine, the Eternal. St. Paul and Socrates, living each within the world of thought and imagery that enshrined his faith, might have found it hard to understand one another; yet for Socrates and for Plato, as for Paul, privation and extremity of the outward, sensuous, life was as nothing in comparison with the relation of the soul to things eternal. This, I take it, is the central content of that faith which we find and respond to within our heritage both of religion and of philosophy. The relation this faith affirms is between each of us—each human being as a soul or spirit capable of reaching out toward a power or agency of good in the universe—and that power in some sense aware, responding, able to sustain and illumine.

Those who become aware of such a relation have distinctive experience of what may be termed an inner history—inner in the sense that it is known in the first instance to the individual person himself and to no other; though, so far as the individual is able to find images, terms, to express his experience, it can be communicated to others who have had experience partially similar, and through such communication and response modification may result of the individual's first rendering of his truth.

A history "inner" in this sense must, it would seem, pertain to every human individual:<sup>1</sup> a history distinguishable from that pub-

<sup>1</sup> To certain of our sub-human fellow-beings also we tend to attribute an inner history. Where, observing behaviour, we recognize "acquirement of meaning" in the biological sense, we incline—in the case of animals with whom we live in sympathy—to interpret this behaviour in terms of such meaning and memory as we experience, though where communication through speech is absent we can have no assurance of any such memory as can create for the individual a continuous inner history.

Such an inner history for the human individual begins—in contrast to the public history beginning at birth—with some remembered moment, perhaps of dawning self-consciousness: in my own case a memory of lying in my nurse's arms, aware of my body moved by hers as she breathed, and somehow, dimly

lily observable, verifiable history constituted by events such as dated birth and death, and bodily interactions with various social institutions. But it is those individuals who become conscious of a relation to God—to some power or value, however imagined, that is for them more significant than their own ego-centred impulses and enjoyments—who experience most fully an inner history, one of spiritual growth, or transformation, or adventure.

"We know that we have passed from death to life," "Old things are passed away: all things are become new:" so St. John and St. Paul communicate their experience of inward revolution, conversion. More tentatively a conversion is expressed by Plato in his image of the prisoners in the cave: "Let us suppose that one of them has been released and compelled suddenly to stand up and turn his neck round and walk with open eyes toward the light."<sup>1</sup> Of that "good which every soul pursues, divining its existence but perplexed" Plato—declaring distrust of his own power to speak—presents light, the sun, as an image, telling the story of the inward adventure of the philosopher in terms of the released prisoner straining unaccustomed eyes at first in pain and bewilderment, becoming at length assured and joyful in the new vision.

We might think also of a history more detailed and nearer our own time, such as the *Apologia* of J. H. Newman, writing, as he says, about his own "most private thoughts and feelings"—"about that living intelligence by which I write and argue and act . . . my mind and its beliefs and sentiments." In this personal record, looking back from the standpoint of his matured faith, he recognizes that before he "fell under the influence of a definite creed," there was relevance to that faith in his childish sense of "unknown influences . . . I thought life might be a dream, or I an Angel and all the world a deception, my fellow angels by a playful device concealing themselves from me and deceiving me with the semblance of a material world;" and again, recalling the time of his "inward conversion" at the age of fifteen—a conversion "of which I still am more certain than that I have hands and feet"—and of his conviction at this time that he was "elected to eternal glory," he speaks of its influence "in confirming me in my mistrust of the reality of material phenomena, and making me rest in the thought of two and two only absolute and luminously self-existent beings, myself and my Creator."<sup>2</sup>

Such a record seems to illustrate well the character of that inner history upon which only the subject of it can look back directly,

wordlessly, wondering at the contact. That moment I recognize as having continuity of meaning, through all change and development, with my later awareness of myself as a being in contact with others.

<sup>1</sup> I use the Golden Treasury translation of *The Republic*.  
<sup>2</sup> *Apologia pro vita sua* (Longmans, 1878), pp. 2, 4.

discerning stages in the development of an individual faith and outlook on the world.

(4) With the thought thus illustrated of an individual inner history we may compare the account given by Professor Ryle of a concept of two histories, a public and a private, that is part of the myth, or dogma, of "the ghost in the machine." According to this dogma, he says, a person "lives through two collateral histories, one consisting of what happens in and to his body, the other consisting of what happens in and to his mind. The first is public, the second private." He goes on to say that according to "the official doctrine" the individual has "unchallengable cognizance" of some at least of the episodes of the private history. Of these events his introspection "is commonly supposed to be immune from illusion," while to everyone else those inner happenings are "inevitably occult."<sup>1</sup>

It is not clear to whom in recent times this "official theory" is attributed. Those of us who, years ago, were lecturing to students reading such textbooks as those of Professors Stout and James, spoke, no doubt, in the textbook terms of introspection as a taking note of one's individual thoughts, feelings and conative tendencies, but never asserted immunity from error in such self-observation—insisted, rather, as Stout's *Groundwork* puts it, that any self-knowledge thus gained must develop in "closest interdependance with interpretation of manifestations of mind in others." Yet whatever doubts we may entertain as to the application of Professor Ryle's mockery, the force of his whole exposition, its relation to the present "climate of thought" may well drive us to examine more closely the imagery that in our religious and philosophic tradition presents an inner history, often of conflict between soul and body.

"I keep under my body and bring it into subjection." St. Paul tells his Corinthian converts. The body, says, Socrates in the *Phaedo*, "fills us with longing, desires, fears, all kinds of fancies and multitudes of absurdities," and the purification of the soul by the philosopher consists in "accustoming it to gather and collect itself apart from the body."

This imagery of the ghost myth,<sup>2</sup> as used by Paul and by Plato in describing an inner history, does not, like the object of Ryle's mockery keep separate "what happens in the body" from the story of the mind. The relation of soul and body is an essential part of the soul's history, but that history is not told in the same terms that science, or materialistic "common sense," would use.

The body, the flesh, was conceived by St. Paul, scholars tell us, not

<sup>1</sup> *The Concept of Mind* by Gilbert Ryle (London, 1949), pp. 11-14.

<sup>2</sup> I use the term "myth" here in the sense of an imaginative rendering of what appears to the thinker a truth which cannot be expressed in terms of the intellect.

as evil in itself, but as weak in resistance to evil; as it were, a natural medium for invading and indwelling sin. "To an extent we can hardly realize," says Dr. H. W. Robinson, the human soul was conceived as an arena of opposing spiritual forces; responsive, as spirit, to the Divine Spirit, responsive through the flesh to the almost personified force of evil, Sin.<sup>1</sup> So Plato conceived the soul encumbered, contaminated with evil through the body, and in the *Phaedrus* vividly portrayed the struggle of the spirit with the body's lust, in imagery of the charioteer and his rebellious steed. When a present-day psychologist speaks—if he still does—of the will controlling animal appetites he is using language which, for many ages, men, both learned and simple, have felt they could verify within their own immediate experience.

In view of the long history and wide varied use of this imagery of inner conflict, I find surprising Professor Ryle's statement that the concept of volition, or of the will, is an "artificial" one, that we do not use in daily life—that novelists do not use.<sup>2</sup> A novelist may not use the term "volition," nor separate the will from the spirit, the active personality, but the inner history with its conflicts, the struggle of the will with bodily appetite, is surely one main theme of novelists. As an instance: in Julia Strachey's *Man on the Pier* (John Lehman 1951) an image occurs that, in its slighter fashion, might compare with the unruly horse of the *Phaedrus*. A man's lust for the wife of a friend is described as a phoenix "weaving its fire nest with his nerves," lying "low on its bed of suffocating sulphurous ember" or beating heavy wings within him, growing daily more vociferous, until by what seemed an "act of violence," with a sense of throwing half of himself away, the man, realizing as intolerable the act toward which he was only urged, ended the conflict—though not the pain—as altered behaviour followed.

Such instances suggest how essential is the concept of the will, however metaphorically expressed, in truth or fiction, to the story of the inner life; but it is not with the story of the inner life that the scientist is concerned. Desiring so to fashion his conclusions that they may be verified in sense, or in an intellectual, impersonal form of experience, the scientist must ignore the individual history that can be communicated only through symbolic imagery to those whose personal experience is adequately similar. He must speak in terms of sensible objects and of the measuring calculating intellect.

(5) It is the existence of these different languages, or different uses of language, that gives force to Ryle's contention concerning "category mistakes" and different "teams of ideas" whose inter-

<sup>1</sup> Article on the Soul (Christian) *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (edited James Hastings, 2nd impression 1934).

<sup>2</sup> Op. cit., pp. 62, 64.

relations may be readily misunderstood. The thinker who sets out to describe human behaviour in terms publicly verifiable may be said to make a category mistake if, unaware and without warning, he includes reference to experience of which only the subject can be directly aware. Of all the descriptive terms commonly applied to human beings there is none, as Ryle argues, that cannot be understood as referring to behaviour publicly perceptible. For instance, the terms, chaste, temperate, self-controlled, may be used by the social scientist in his examination of publicly perceptible actions and relations, but the spiritual conflicts that a lover may experience in the achievement of chastity, temperance, self-control,—such inwardly felt violence of the will as Plato, or the novelist, attempts through imagery to communicate—cannot be described in terms belonging to the scientist's vocabulary.

The resources of the speech we employ in the intercourse of daily life are of wider range than those by which scientific knowledge, in the stricter sense, is built up. The scientist, with his verifiability test, the literary artist or other writer concerned to communicate the inner life, may each develop his own usage of language toward a distinctive perfection: but in our common thought and speech the different uses intermingle and interpenetrate in a manner that, though it may generate misunderstandings, can often serve well enough our complex purposes. Recalling episodes in our individual history we commonly realize something of how at the time they felt, and have glimpses also of how our action could have appeared to an observer. Similarly our perception and memory of another's action involves usually an element of sympathetic awareness of how it feels to act thus; and the descriptive terms we use carry for us and our hearers something of both aspects of meaning. It is according to our habits of mind and main direction of interest that we either view others mainly in terms of what Martin Buber has called the *I-It* relation, as objects observably behaving in various ways, or on the other hand, maintain in speech and thought awareness of each confronted being as a *Thou*, equally with myself a centre of intimate personal experience.

(6) I have spoken at some length here of the individual history that is immediately experienced in its passage and looked back on as continuous with the experienced present; also of the speech that attempts some partial communication of such a history. I have done so because the realization of this speech and history as different from the speech of science, and the objects of which science gives account, seems to me essential for the understanding of religious and philosophic faith.

The faith with which—as Jaspers says—I am identified, and of which I seek to make my life a witness, is directed indeed toward

truth and knowledge, but a truth and knowledge different from that of the scientist.

Let us refer again to the passages quoted earlier—statements by St. Paul and by Tennyson concerning faith. St. Paul looked beyond this life to the perfecting of faith's partial knowledge in participation with the knowledge of God: knowledge within which—as his religious tradition had taught—he and those he addressed were known intimately, perfectly, in all the depth and secrecy of their individual being. It was with such knowledge united with love—faintly, partially shared under limitation of human infirmity—that St. Paul sought to know and love his converts and prayed that they might learn to know and love one another.

Tennyson, writing *In Memoriam*, contrasted that faith which he trusted came as “a beam in darkness” from God with the knowledge, coming to us more readily, concerned with things we see and touch; but his poem recurs again and again to thoughts of that other form of knowledge, with mutual love, that he once experienced in communication with his friend, and for which he still longed, striving to pass beyond compelling images of “the darkened heart’s” last journey and resting place, to conceive his friend as still aware, in communion now with the penetrating, compassionate insight of God.

The form of knowledge thus illustrated from the writings of poet and religious thinker is regarded by those philosophers who have recognised it as not to be characterized in terms of the bifurcation of subject and object.<sup>1</sup> It may rather be said to exist between, and inclusive of, the *I* and *Thou*; that which is characterized as objective, or merely subjective, being abstracted from the reality of our immediate experience. Attempting to communicate this experience, we fall back inevitably into speech that can appear as referring merely to objects. I speak of the human spirit I have known in community of awareness as *Thou*, and may seem to be speaking of an *It*, a fleshy creature with observable characteristics. I attempt to speak of the supreme spirit toward whom mine reaches out as its ultimate meaning and fulfilment, and again, I am compelled to speak in terms applicable to objects within the material universe—even within my own small range of sense knowledge.

<sup>1</sup> As well as to the writings of Karl Jaspers, I would refer here particularly to the articles of Professor Hallett, where he speaks of the “fatal error” of “radical objectivism”—the “identification of the real with the objective”—(*Philosophy* XIV, 54) and of the “possession” of the self and of “other minds in mutuality” as distinct from knowledge of them as objects (*Ibid.*, 172): also of knowledge of the self, “too immediate easily to fall under the *prima facie* interpretation of knowledge as a relation of a subject to an object.” (*Philosophy* XX, 77, p. 241) and of knowledge of other minds as agents that—unlike bodies—“do not appear as intrinsic objects of qualified spatio-temporal contents” (*Ibid.*, 242).

This helplessness of our speech to convey adequately even so much as our immediate experience implies is one source, I think, of the apparent conflict between the expressed faiths of men sincerely religious. Each of us must express our faith in accordance with that inner history within which we have communed with others who have "spoken to our condition": our contemporaries, or those who in the past contributed to that tradition with which we have contact. Must we then say of our faith, so individually determined, that however it may sustain and illumine our lives, it has no content meriting the name of knowledge?

If, as thinkers, we cannot recognize any knowledge but the objective, any speech other than that dealing with objects, or the subjective, "emotive," we must agree, I think, with the writer on "theories of religious knowledge" who argues that our existence as part of ultimate reality does not give knowledge of that reality.<sup>1</sup> If, however, we recognize a form of speech that refers to objects as symbols only, while its intention is to communicate an experience transcending the dichotomy of subject and object, we may find in such symbolic consciousness and intention, "a springboard toward transcendence."<sup>2</sup>

Recognizing, through our own immediate experience, in the records our religious and philosophic heritage preserves, intention to communicate encounter with a Being transcending sensuous and conceptual knowledge, we receive some assurance—not proof of the existence of God, but witness to that transcendent Being: and, with it, a fellowship in faith that helps us "to break through the prison"<sup>3</sup> of our own subjectivity. Reading, and recognizing as authentic, say, the words of St. Paul, or those the Gospel writers record as spoken by Jesus, we encounter—though only through words and images a historic situation has fashioned—a mind, a *Thou*, of wisdom and spiritual range beyond our own. In such encounter we experience our own conscious being, illuminated and enlarged, and enjoy, under human limitation, a form of knowledge we can conceive as again enlarged, perfected, when our spirits shall have been released by death.

Such faith and knowledge is too distinct in its essential nature and scope for its enjoyment to be inhibited through respect for the achievement of science, and for the scientific criteria of verifiability. We do not expect adequate verification either in sense or intellect of the images and intellectual constructions that carry the intention of our faith. We can find no solace in any intellectual solution we can formulate of the problem of evil. The conflict that shook the faith

<sup>1</sup> *Theories of Religious Knowledge from Kant to Jasper* by Bella K. Milmed. Philosophy XXIX. 110, pp. 112-13.

<sup>2</sup> *The Perennial Scope of Philosophy*, p. 30.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

of Tennyson between "nature red in tooth and claw" and God realized as love, still brings distress. Yet even this conflict is more endurable if—with Gabriel Marcel—we hold that faith is ultimately concerned not with intellectual solution of problems, but with participation in mystery. Through faith such feeble efforts as we can make to ease a little suffering can become conscious participation in the mystery of that divine redemption for which the whole suffering creation waits.<sup>1</sup>

Thus scepticism concerning the adequacy of religious images and constructions can be so integrated into faith that we are not cut off either from those who in past time have found their faith's expression in imagery different from ours, nor from that Reality intended both by our symbols and by theirs.

<sup>1</sup> *Romans viii. 22-3.*

# PRINCIPLES OF MORALITY<sup>1</sup>

Professor STEPHEN TOULMIN

WHEN we first begin to reflect about conduct in a philosophical way, whether as philosophers or not, we look for general truths, fundamental principles. Our acceptances and rejections, preferences, commendations and disgusts, seem at the start chaotic and un-systematic, and we hope to reduce them to order—to show that there are general principles by reference to which all our varied acts, admirations and decisions can be understood and justified. The number of such principles should for choice be small. Ideally, we think, it should be possible to present our progress through life not as a thing of fits and starts, of zig-zags, gestures and recoils, but as aimed in a single uniform direction. If we esteem some things above others, praise some men, commend some deeds, admire some paintings this should be (according to the ideal) because in each case the Supreme Value or Ultimate Good finds expression in the esteemed, praised, commended or admired thing, man, deed or picture. We hope to find a single standard by coming up to or falling short of which things of all sorts will earn the prizes or rebukes they deserve.

This particular ambition is the most grandiose a philosopher can conceive, and most of us do not keep it for long. Merit (we come to see) springs from no one source: its forms are Protean. It is no good trying to find a standard by which things of *all* sorts can be judged. If we praise some men, commend some deeds, admire some pictures above others, it is not because the winners each come up to the same general standard: it is because each comes up to its own appropriate standard in a way in which the rejected men, deeds or pictures do not. The things which make an occupation a worthwhile one, the things which (morally speaking) do a man credit, the things which mark off the good Pekingese, vacuum-cleaner or Van Gogh—these are, and must in the nature of things be different. The ideal of *the* Supreme Good, *the* Ultimate Value ceases to hypnotize us, and we are prepared to embark on the more modest enterprise of seeing just what different sorts of judgement there can be, and what criteria are appropriate to the assessment of things in each class.

Yet even when we have given up the search for a single, unique criterion of value applicable in all fields alike, our desire for simplicity may remain. One thing we may grant: that the criteria for the moral judgement of an action are entirely independent (say) of those for the aesthetic appraisal of a picture. Nevertheless we may still feel

<sup>1</sup> Paper read before the Melbourne Local Section of the Australasian Association of Philosophy, 8th October, 1954.

that within any particular field—the field of morality, say, or that of self-interest—there should be a single fundamental principle, and we look to the philosophers to tell us what it is. Nor are we wholly disappointed. Plenty of them seemingly oblige us by producing formulae which they offer to us as “the fundamental principle of morality.” Unfortunately about the correct way of expressing the principle they are far from agreed. Mill, for instance, produces one formula, put in terms of utility, Kant produces another, in terms of universalizability; and it is clear that neither is going to be happy to accept the other’s account.

How then are we to decide between them? That is what I want to ask in this paper. And I shall approach the question, not by considering the different answers philosophers have produced each on its own merits, but by a more roundabout course—asking first, what kind of thing such a fundamental principle of morality could be; and then going on to discuss, how far (if at all) any one philosopher can hope to establish his chosen fundamental principle of morality to the exclusion of its rivals.

## I

When a philosopher puts forward some formula as “the fundamental principle of morality,” how, then, are we to understand him? Appeals to everyday moral rules, everyday moral principles, we are familiar with; but what is added by saying that a principle is “the fundamental one”? Clearly one thing we shall expect to find is that this fundamental principle is more general than most of our everyday rules and principles: if it is to tell us the essence of morality, it must be wide enough, general enough, to embrace the everyday rules within its scope. This observation leads us to the first natural hypothesis: perhaps the *sole* difference between everyday moral principles and philosophers’ fundamental principles is this degree of generality—perhaps, that is to say, the relation between principles of morality and everyday principles is just one of width, the fundamental principle embracing all everyday principles within its scope in the way the principle that a man ought to do what he has promised might be held to embrace, as narrower rules, injunctions to keep verbal promises and written promises, explicit promises and implied promises.

We must examine this suggestion for a moment. I want to put forward two arguments against it: first, that in calling our everyday rules “principles” at all, we *imply* that there is no such more general rule of which they are all alike specifications; second, that the principles actually offered to us by philosophers as “fundamental principles of morality” lose their plausibility if interpreted in the way suggested.

As to the first point: let me compare the question, what makes a moral rule a "principle," with the question, "What makes one part of a tree its 'trunk'?" The answer to this latter question is easily given: the trunk of a tree is that part to which all the limbs, branches, twigs and leaves are directly or indirectly connected, and from which all alike draw their sap. A limb of one tree might resemble the trunk of another in every internal respect, so that if they were both severed from their attachments they might be indistinguishable; yet the limb will not for this reason be a trunk, nor the trunk a limb—since the one is rooted directly into the ground and the other is attached to an intermediate sap-bearer off which grow also further limbs. In calling a trunk a trunk we imply that there is no larger unit to which it is organically connected. We do say, it is true, not only that a tree is *made up of* limbs, trunk, etc., but also that a wood is *made up of* trees; but it is a different sort of "being made up of" in each case. For a number of trees to constitute a wood it is not necessary that they should share an organic connection. We do not require that the trees going to make up a wood should all join on to some subterranean super-trunk, and so make of the wood a single, vast, spreading tree: all that is required is that the trees should be neighbours, rooted in the same stretch of ground, and that they should form a fairly compact and recognizable group having a reasonably defined boundary.

A somewhat similar pattern emerges, I suggest, if we consider what are the things that make a moral rule a "principle." The claims arising for a man in any particular situation are like leaves in this respect, that one can always ask from where they derive their force. If this question is asked, a sequence of considerations can usually be put forward of increasing generality: at each step, we relate the claim under discussion to a more general rule, and so join this claim up with a wider class of other particular claims—the claim is shown to derive its force from the same general rule as these other claims. But there is only a finite number of junctions between a leaf and its trunk, and only a limited number of steps in backing a particular claim before we reach a rule so general that there is no going behind it—no going on from it, that is, to a still wider, more general rule of the same type. This stage normally comes when we say such a thing as "Well, it was a promise, and promises ought to be kept": if a man demands a more general rule at this point, we do not normally know what sort of thing he is looking for. Indeed, to say that one makes it (or regards it as) a principle to keep promises implies just that—that when one comes to the rule concerned one will treat it as a trunk, not as a limb, i.e. one will refuse to entertain the question, from what wider rule still the principle draws its moral sap in turn. The chain of reasons ends here. As with trees, of course,

so with moral arguments: though a number of principles are not connected alike to a single, more general super-principle, they may nevertheless form a well-defined group of neighbours, all (so to speak) rooted in the same stretch of ground. In this sense, they may go to make up a larger whole. But to this last point I shall return later.

The force of the term "principle" as applied to moral rules being what it is, there seems therefore to be no room for a fundamental principle of morality—if the job of that fundamental principle is to be, to embrace promise-keeping, abstention from cruelty and all the rest, in just the way the rule about promise-keeping embraces verbal and written, explicit and implied promises. But that, it may be said, shows only that our use of the term "principle" in this connection rests upon unexamined assumptions: common sense may not recognize the underlying principle of moral judgement, but it is the business of the philosopher to lay it bare, and show us the common source from which all our everyday rules draw their morality—if found, this source would indeed be properly called "the fundamental principle of morality."

Against this view, I must advance my second argument. If this is really what philosophers have been trying to do when they put forward and argued on behalf of "fundamental principles of morality" then they have been singularly unsuccessful. Reading Kant or Mill on this subject, one usually feels that they have established something, even if it is not always clear what. But whatever it is they prove, whatever point they succeed in making when they offer us a "principle of morality," we have only to interpret the principle as an everyday moral rule for the point to evaporate completely.

This is easily shown. When either a general moral rule or a narrower specification of it is equally relevant to a moral problem, it does not make any difference to the soundness of our appeal which we cite as backing: I can show someone why there is a claim on him in a particular case, either by pointing out "You did write saying 'I shall be there,'" or by saying "It was a promise." If the more specific consideration has the force we claim it to have, then the more general one must have the same force: for the more specific one derives its force from the general rule—the fact of the man's writing as he did is morally relevant just because to write so was, or was as good as, to promise. Apply this criterion in the case of philosophers' "principles of morality": if they are simply entirely general rules of an everyday kind, we can appeal to them equally well on all occasions where moral considerations arise. In the present case, I can say "you ought to go, because you wrote saying you would," or I can say "you ought to go, because you promised"; or I can make the same point in even more general terms by saying "you ought to go, because

it would be utility-maximizing (or because it would be treating all rational agents as members of the kingdom of ends) . . . But can I? Can I, that is, make the *same* point by this further step? Surely not; and surely the philosophers who put forward such principles never intended us to try.

Mr. Carritt, it is true, interprets the Utilitarians as meaning just this, but he does only so as to be able to ridicule them; and he does so in the face of Mill's explicit warning against this interpretation of his views. The principle of utility, as Mill explains in the opening paragraphs of *Utilitarianism*, is presented as a test, not for single deeds but for general practices, not as a moral rule itself but as a tribunal before which legal and moral rules have to answer. Nor are Kant's principles any more happy when treated as moral rules: the force of his claim that rational beings must be treated as ends not as means, obscure though it may be, is more than that of the injunction "Don't be beastly to other people"; and this itself could hardly be suggested as *the* moral rule, enshrining on all occasions the peculiar moral point of whatever less general rule we invoke. "Why not?" you may ask—to which for my present purpose it is enough to reply that, though we might respect the kind heart of a man who chose to make "Don't be beastly" his only rule of conduct, this was certainly not what Kant was exhorting us to do.

I conclude provisionally, therefore, that in moral arguments there is room for a number of principles of greatest generality, and that their individual point is lost if we try to merge them all into a single, completely general principle. Those philosophers who have seriously tried to run our different rules of conduct together have, in fact, rarely been able to cut the number of independent matters of principle down below two or three. Butler, you recall, cuts it down to three—benevolence, fidelity and veracity—and even if we were to treat veracity as a species of fidelity, we can still find no convincing way of interpreting benevolence as a sort of fidelity (or, to use Sir David Ross's jargon, optimificity as contract), nor vice versa. The copse of morality contains, at the very least, *two* trees.

## II

So much for the critical part of my paper, in which I have suggested what "principles of morality" are not. Before I go on to ask again what they *are*, I want to make a bit of a detour. For the points I have been labouring in the first part of the paper have sometimes been misleadingly put, and I should like to say something about this. "In backing a particular moral claim," I said earlier, "there is only a limited number of steps we can take before we reach a rule so general that there is no going behind it—no going on from it," I hastened to qualify myself, "to a still wider, more general rule of the

same type." This qualification, I now want to show, was absolutely vital; since without it what I said would have been a half-truth with unacceptable implications. For notice how one can argue. After a limited number of steps in a moral argument we reach principles of a sort there is no going behind: if at this point a man continues to ask for reasons, then (some have said) there is no further talking to him. The chain of reasons has an end. When we get to that end, to the principles, that is, we reach something which a man must just accept—or take the consequences. If at this point he goes on asking questions, he cannot expect us to treat his request seriously. Provided a man has a rational faculty, the principles of morals will commend themselves to him in the same way as do the principles of geometry and arithmetic, or (say) the proposition that a whole is equal to its parts. Suppose a man deny the most obvious propositions of lines or numbers, and perversely contend that the whole is not equal to its parts, there is no reasoning with him: he puts himself outside the pale of reason. And 'tis as absurd and blameworthy to mistake negligently plain right and wrong as it would be absurd and ridiculous for a man in arithmetical matters ignorantly to believe that twice two is not equal to four, or wilfully and obstinately to contend, *against his own clear knowledge*, that the whole is not equal to all its parts. But there, I have dropped into the very language of the passage Patrick Nowell-Smith quotes from Samuel Clarke in his Pelican *Ethics*; a passage in which, as Mr. Nowell-Smith comments, "the theory underlying persecution is admirably explained."

How did we get here? By seeing that there are principles of greatest generality in morals, and drawing the wrong conclusions from this observation. We may say that at this point the search for wider and wider principles reaches its natural termination—and this is the true interpretation of the motto that "the chain of reasons has an end." But to say this is not the same as to say that at this point talk must stop. Still less is it the same as to say that at this point talk must be replaced by other means of persuasion, as Clarke implies and others have hastened to conclude. Why then should philosophers have been so ready to take this further step? I think there is a reason for this, which throws light on the nature of the philosopher's calling, and on its limitations.

"The chain of reasons has an end" does not mean "a point is reached at which talk stops"; but it does mean that a point is reached at which, if talk continues, it takes a radically new turn. What I suspect is that this turn is not only new but essentially non-philosophical. For consider what we should really do if we reached this point in a practical case. We are thrashing out some moral issue with a man, and we find after a time that one thing alone divides us. One of us accepts, the other is sincerely doubtful about a wife's

duty to her husband. "If a man is a dull old stick," says Jolly to Straight, "Why shouldn't his wife have a little fun on the side? I don't see any wrong in it: in my opinion you are just sticking to out-dated tabu with no genuine foundation to it, the relic of times when a woman was a man's chattel." How is Straight to answer this challenge? They are certainly at a point where little good would be done by invoking yet more general principles. What is at issue is not the question, whether the wife's conduct is covered by some principle to which Jolly and Straight both subscribe: it is the principle itself which is in question. The road to greater generality is therefore closed: what alternative is open?

I can think of one move Straight might make which, to my mind, though not the only possible one, would be a good one. He might go to the bookshelf, take down a copy of Tolstoy's novel *Anna Karenin*, and say to Jolly, "Read this." And a fortnight later they could meet again and carry on the dispute from this point.

Why do I say this is a good move? To explain why, let me return to my earlier image of the pattern of reasons in a moral argument as the branches of a tree, whose trunk corresponds to a moral principle: I want to add one thing to this image which will perhaps not bear very close examination, but which is near enough for my present point. The claims arising for a man, I said, are like leaves: they draw their virtue by channels which lead us back through branches and limbs to the trunk. The trunk in Jolly and Straight's case is a wife's duty of fidelity. Where, asks Jolly in effect, does the trunk draw *its* virtue from? Nowhere, he argues, for it is just a piece of dead wood. To this an intuitionist like Clarke will have to reply: "Trunks do not draw their goodness from anywhere: they are themselves the final source. And a man who professes not to recognize some principle as a sound one, who does not acknowledge the living tree when it is placed before him, is either defective or a liar: if he is not denying the plain testimony of his rational faculty, this can only be because his rational equipment is sub-normal." How does Straight's reaction, of handing over the novel, improve on the intuitionist's? To begin with, it allows for the possibility of a genuine dispute: and it does this by recognizing that a trunk does draw its goodness from somewhere, even though not from a super-trunk. And is not this correct? To see that a principle is still a living one, a green one, that it is not dead wood, is surely to see that there is something in life from which it draws its virtue. Whatever sort of thing this is, it is far more complex than can be put in a yet-more-general principle: it is something which can be grasped only by seeing in extreme particular detail how in action the principle bears upon our lives, what hangs on accepting or ignoring it. It means (to adapt my

(image) recognizing in what part of our lives the principle is rooted, and over what regions its roots extend.

This sort of move need not, of course, be a conclusive one. It is open to Jolly to argue that, in important respects, life is not as Tolstoy represented it, so that the scales are unfairly weighted against Anna; and he may seek to turn the force of Straight's appeal by counter-appealing to reports of the wretched lives actually led by the more downtrodden late-nineteenth-century wives and mothers. And of course facts, if one can quote them, are more relevant than fictions, and first-hand experiences more relevant than hearsay . . . "Experience," as they say, "is the Best School." However, as the saying goes on, the Fees are very high: and the reconstruction of life by a first-class novelist, if vivid and imaginative, provides one with as good a source of vicarious experience as most.

Furthermore, the move may be misunderstood. "Really," Jolly may reply, "Anna was too impulsive and indiscreet. The risks she ran were quite excessive: there's no reason why, with a little contrivance, a wife shouldn't avoid rousing her husband's stupid jealousy." The issue may get shifted, that is to say, away from the area of morality to that—so to speak—of technique. So the question of the moral relevance of the picture Tolstoy gives us can be raised. Still, pitfalls apart, this move of Straight's does have the merit of getting the argument going again, and of doing so by shifting it away from the consideration of moral principles in the abstract to the actual impact of these principles on the detailed working-out of our lives.

It is this task, of mapping the root systems of our moral principles, which in my view is not one for the philosopher. For the natural direction of the philosopher's work is towards generality, and we must now go into reverse. Philosophers have not, of course, been at a loss for a word to indicate in what region the roots are put down—J. S. Mill's "happiness," my own late-lamented "satisfaction," Dr. Baier's phrase "natural human goods" are all, I suspect, signposts in this direction. But to show convincingly how far-reaching the roots of a moral principle can be, and just where we are led if we follow them out—this is a task for which a philosopher is professionally unfitted, if not positively disabled. It is one which a great novelist can certainly do much more adequately.

Once again, Mill's *Utilitarianism* deserves good marks. In his first chapter, he himself uses the image of the roots of a tree to indicate the relation of the truths really underlying a science to the science: they "may perform their office equally well, though they be never dug down to and exposed to light." And he goes on to make a famous distinction between formal proof and what he calls "considerations capable of determining the intellect," which seems to me entirely

to the point. Once we reach the turning-point in moral argument, the real matters of principle or the really fundamental ends, the time for formal proof is past. From now on what we need is considerations capable of determining the intellect either to give or withhold its assent. This indeed is something the Tolstoys of the world can provide for us; and do in a way that we philosophers cannot hope either to improve on or, I suspect, to formalize.

### III

I must now bring this detour to an end, and return to the main topic of the paper—though the considerations brought to light in the course of the detour are not without value for this topic. I had got as far as deciding what philosophers' principles of morality are not—that is, utterly general moral rules of an everyday kind. I left until now the question, If they are not that, what then are they?

Now I remarked earlier that one thing can be made up of others in all sorts of ways: the limbs of a tree have an organic connection to the branches and to the trunk, but the trees making up a wood need have no organic connection—all we require of them is proximity, compactness and a reasonably well-defined boundary. The model can help us again now. For though we may give up thinking that what makes all moral rules alike moral is as-it-were an organic connection—and that what is required of the philosopher is that he should uncover the subterranean super-trunk from which all moral rules derive such morality as they possess—though we may give up this idea, there are still plenty of questions left to us to ask. Suppose, for instance, it is as-it-were the wood in which they stand that makes these principles alike moral, the fact of their being rooted in a particular part of our life in a way which it takes a Tolstoy to discover and present to us faithfully and in all its detail; then it is still open to us to ask what the boundaries of this wood are. If we believe that the copse of morality has a well-defined boundary, then it is a fair thing to ask philosophers that they should trace it out.

This, I shall argue, is one thing philosophers have in fact been doing when they put forward their fundamental "principles of morality"—defining morality in the sense of delimiting its boundaries, showing how it abuts on to, but is distinct from, law, tabu, etiquette, technique, enlightened self-interest and so on. Certainly Kant's distinction between moral maxims, counsels of prudence and imperatives of skill is a necessary part of any such boundary-drawing. But one thing needs saying about the way in which they have tried to perform their task. Too often they have been Ptolemaic in their methods. They have approached their task expecting to delimit morality accurately by producing a simple formula; and when the formula of their choice failed to do the whole job have resorted to

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and Gangotri  
philosophical epicycles. But there is no more reason to suppose that a single criterion will serve to mark off morality and its principles from all those things which they are not than there is to take for granted that the orbits of the planets are perfect circles. What the form of the boundary is must be found out, not assumed beforehand.

Still, even though no single formula may do the whole job of delimiting morality, there is one thing it can hope to do: it can indicate the way in which some *sector* of the boundary runs. It can serve, that is, to represent the shape of the boundary *in a given direction*. And this I am sure philosophers' super-principles have been used to do—to mark the bounds of the area of morality along a certain stretch, and so to repel attempts to take over the all or part of the area by annexing it to some neighbouring one.

Let me give an historical illustration of this. Throughout the eighteenth century philosophers felt the need to show that, properly looked at, morality and self-interest must coincide. So we find even Butler arguing that, if we sit down in a cool hour and consider what our own truest interest is, we shall always find ourselves drawn towards the moral or altruistic act—the implication being that, if in a particular case we fail to find this happy coincidence, then we couldn't have sat down for long enough, or the hour couldn't have been cool enough. Against this whole trend of eighteenth-century moral philosophizing, we find Kant—ever re-asserting the distinction between considerations of morality and those of self-interest in a situation in which philosophers had come to forget how the line between them runs. As a way of re-emphasizing the location of this line, the categorical imperative principle will do very well. Of course, the criterion it spotlights will not serve to mark off all the other sectors of the boundary, those dividing morality from tabu, from law, from etiquette and so on. But if Kant appears to overlook this fact, that is perhaps understandable; seeing that his eyes were fixed—and with some reason—in the direction of the sector at that time under attack.

The situation as I see it is similar to that Mr. L. N. B. Thomas found when he examined the function of definitions of poetry.<sup>1</sup> Whenever people have said "poetry is . . ." or "the essence of poetry is . . ." in a way which carried conviction, there was always (he found) some implied contrast. Matthew Arnold says that poetry is a criticism of life, and people quote this remark in isolation, as though he had been identifying poetry and propaganda: but look at the context in which he made it, and you will see that he says this

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Thomas is at present Director of the National Gallery of Western Australia. His unpublished thesis on this subject is full of illuminating suggestions of this sort, but it had the ill-fortune to be adjudicated on by teachers of English, not by philosophers.

precisely in order to contrast poetry with *belles-lettres*. Wordsworth says poetry is emotion recollected in tranquillity; and again his assertion needs its complementary denial—poetry is not (as some say) the spontaneous overflowing of a brimming heart, it is not *gush*. To define poetry, to say “poetry is . . .” or “the essence of poetry is . . .” can therefore be a real help to our understanding, provided it is clear *from the context* what contrast is implied—*belles-lettres*, *gush*, oratory, music or whatever. The formula offered, “emotion recollected in tranquillity” or “a criticism of life,” then serves to emphasize the special sector in the boundary of poetry which divides it from the *belles-lettres* or *gush*. It says in effect: “the essential thing about poetry, as opposed to *gush* (say), is . . .”, or “the essential thing to mention when marking off poetry from *gush* is . . .”

Definitions of morality, distillations of its essence, formulae presented as its “fundamental principle”; these I am inclined to think of along with definitions of poetry. They do not map the whole boundary of morality, but they do help to delimit it, by contrasting it with some one other thing. Such a dictum as “the essence of morality is that its imperatives are categorical” no more tells us the only thing worth knowing about morality, than does the motto “poetry is a criticism of life” tell us the only worthwhile truth about poetry: neither gives us a necessary and sufficient criterion for distinguishing morality (or poetry) from all other things. But when any sort of frivolous jingle goes by the name of poetry, or when morality comes to be confused with worldly wisdom, then may be the time to re-assert the old distinctions, and to re-erect the boundary-stones along the sector where they were in danger of being lost to sight.

Two things follow from this analysis. In the first place, if we ask how far any one philosopher can claim to establish his chosen principle or definition to the exclusion of those which other philosophers advocate, then, as a matter of strict logic, the answer is that he cannot. If we pick out some one feature as the essence of morality, we can justify our choice only by reference to some implied contrast, with self-interest (say) or tabu or law. And if two philosophers are interested in contrasting morality with different things, then—so far as logic goes—there will be no opposition between the fundamental principles which each will formulate as a result.

But perhaps we must go further than logic takes us. After all, there may well be crucial issues in moral philosophy at any given time. There may, in 1780 say, be some contrast which especially needs emphasizing. Definitions of morality, accordingly, have never been produced by philosophers solely from a desire for logical precision. This is why there is always some plausibility in the view I took the trouble to argue against first, the view that such principles

are intended to be treated as moral rules. For these definitions or principles have not only a logical but also an authentically moral force. Everyday moral rules they are not, but at another level they remain moral, not just logical, principles. The essence of morality for any philosopher is that which he believes it essential to emphasize—essential because only by emphasizing that can one defend the threatened sector of its boundary. And for those who consider the autonomy of morality worth defending, who are unwilling to see it turned into a dependent province either of desire and self-interest (however coolly sat-down-upon or thoroughly mulled-over) or of tabu or law or politics or etiquette or theology (all of them directions from which it has been and is still at one time or another advanced upon), for them the task of delimiting the threatened sector of the boundary will be more than one of logical analysis. It will have a genuinely moral urgency.

## DISCUSSION ON RETRIBUTION

A retributive theory of punishment must at least say that it is a necessary condition for the justification of a punishment that the person punished should be guilty. But "guilty" here may be taken in two different senses, giving two very different kinds of justification. In the first sense, to be guilty is to have wilfully disobeyed a law or order of some authority, and it is the defiance of this authority which justifies punishment. Mr. Mabbott has put up a good case for a view of this kind.<sup>1</sup> It is clear that we regularly do justify the punishment of offenders on the ground that they have broken rules, and therefore deserve to be punished. And there are some moral situations (those of officials charged with the administration of regulations) in which this is the only fact to be considered in deciding whether or not to punish. As to the view that this constitutes the only valid justification of punishment, I wish to make two comments.

Firstly, I can see no reason for saying (as both Mr. Mabbott and Mr. Mundle do) that punishment can be justified only by a breach of a *law* or *rule*. The law-courts of highly developed political societies may indeed be bound by this principle. But parents (whose punishments are much more numerous than those of magistrates, and surely not less justifiable) and schoolmasters and ships' captains punish for disobedience to specific orders as well as to general rules. Furthermore, in less formalized systems of authority there is always the right to punish evident misdemeanours whether or not they have been explicitly forbidden. I don't suppose there is any school which has a rule forbidding the smearing of the classroom seats with glue; but any boy in any ordinary school who did it would certainly be punished, and with ample justification. Even the most elaborately codified systems of law have vague offences like "committing a nuisance" which can be made to cover plenty of anti-social actions which the legislators didn't think of beforehand.

Secondly, while the fact that a law or order has been disobeyed may provide a justification for punishment, it cannot provide a complete, independent or ultimate justification. The argument "You have broken this rule, therefore you deserve punishment" invites the question "Why should I obey this rule?" Before one can justify a given punishment imposed by a given authority for a given offence, one must first justify the right of this authority to make rules controlling this sphere of action, and to impose punishments of this kind. This may be easy (as with the authority of Her Majesty's Parliament and judges over you and me, or the authority of my neighbour over his children). It may be not so easy (as with the authority of the French government over the Moroccans, or the authority of Legree over Uncle Tom). But until a justification of the authority has been given, the punishment remains unjustified. (Many wise men have held the doctrine of Natural Law, which says that there are some sorts of actions which no authority has the right to prohibit.) Thus a retributive theory of this kind requires to be supplemented by a theory of the way in which the authority of rulers is to be justified; and it is consistent with many different theories on this question. In particular, it is consistent with a utilitarian theory of what justifies the authority of governments. It is also consistent with a utilitarian theory of how punishments should be graded as between different offences and different offenders. For the principle "Those

<sup>1</sup> *Mind*, April 1939 and *Philosophy*, July 1955.  
<sup>2</sup> *Philosophical Quarterly*, July 1954.

and only those who have disobeyed laws or orders should be punished" neither says nor implies anything about the severity of punishments. It is not, however, consistent with the principle that "the infliction of a particular punishment should be determined by the good that *particular punishment* will do either to the criminal or to society"—this is Mabbott's most valuable point.<sup>1</sup>

If the retributive theory is to offer a complete and self-contained justification of punishment, it must be understood in a different sense. In this sense, which is the usual one, "guilt" means moral wickedness; and it is the doing of a moral wrong which deserves and justifies punishment. If ill desert attaches to moral wrong, it does so independently of the rulings of governments. And the law-enforcing activities of governments may themselves be justified on the ground that they give the wicked their deserts. (Locke's theory is rather like this—the authority of governments is justified because they can more effectively and conveniently inflict those punishments which the Law of Nature already authorizes; and Locke's account of the way men surrender to special officers their personal right of taking vengeance on wrongdoers is not so unhistorical as is sometimes maintained.)

On this view, the infliction of suffering<sup>2</sup> on the wicked is a good thing quite apart from deterrent, reformative or other useful consequences. This is the feature of the retributive theory at which people are most apt to boggle. It seems to me that the punishment of wrongdoers does constitute a good independent of its deterrent or reformative effects, though not a very great good, inasmuch as it gives satisfaction to the resentment or indignation against wickedness which is felt by those who care for morality. This resentment, this inclination to make the wrongdoer suffer for the harm he has done, is perhaps the earliest source of the practice of punishing wrongdoers; it is independent of, and exists alongside, the desire to punish in order to prevent wrongdoing. The retributive theory in its normal form takes the satisfaction of this resentment to be the central and primary aim of punishment.

To a large extent the retributive view of punishment works in harmony with utilitarian views. Conflict may arise between them on two sorts of questions. Firstly, there can be conflict as to which actions are to be made punishable. A utilitarian will be unwilling to punish actions which arouse moral repugnance without doing any evident harm (Sunday trading and homosexuality might be examples). He will be unwilling to punish actions which, though they do harm, do less harm than would probably be done in the course of suppressing them. He will be unwilling to punish actions, however wicked and harmful, if there is no prospect that punishment will lessen their incidence. A retributionist (as such) will be prepared to punish in all these cases. Conversely, a retributionist may refuse to punish actions done for reasons of conscience, or actions done or omitted negligently but without evil intent, whereas a utilitarian will ignore these considerations of motive.

Secondly, there will be conflict as to the relative severity of punishments to be inflicted for different sorts of offences, and upon different sorts of offenders. On this issue, a utilitarian will consider the deterrent and the reformative effects of different punishments upon different types of offenders, and the ratio between the suffering inflicted by the punishment and the suffering prevented by the observance of the law. He will in general affix the severest penalties to those types of offence which do the greatest harm, and which it is therefore most important to prevent. A retributionist will consider the "moral gravity"

<sup>1</sup> *Mind*, April 1939, p. 162.  
<sup>2</sup> Mabbott objects to the word "suffering" here, on the ground that there is a difference between inflicting an evil on an offender and depriving him of a good (e.g. his liberty). Surely this is a quibble. A man imprisoned for several years suffers, and is meant to suffer—probably he suffers more than if he had been severely flogged.

of the individual offence, and will try to make his punishments proportionate thereto. Mundle<sup>1</sup> has recently offered a defence of this principle. I agree that it is on grounds of "moral gravity," rather than on utilitarian grounds, that we often proceed in determining the severity of punishments. But I shall argue that the principle that the severity of punishment should be proportionate to the moral gravity of the offence is not a clear principle suited to give us systematic guidance on this matter.

The difficulty is that in order to apply the principle we need to be able to measure the degree of moral turpitude which different offences possess. If retributive punishment is, as I have maintained, primarily a matter of satisfying indignation, then the measure of moral guilt would presumably be the amount of indignation aroused by the offence. In fact I think we do habitually use this as our private measure of wickedness; and there are parents who punish according to this measure. But it is obviously unsuited to be a public measure of the amount of punishment deserved, for it varies far too much in relation to similar offences from person to person and from time to time. Anybody who wishes to make "moral gravity" determine the severity of punishment in a penal system must find some more consistent means of measurement than this.

The most obvious objective criterion, which seems to appeal both to small children<sup>2</sup> and to politically immature adults, is the amount of damage done; the greater the harm caused, the heavier the punishment should be. This works well enough in cases where the punishment is at the same time a restitution, a restoring of a *status quo* which the wrongdoer has disturbed; and the reasonableness of adapting the punishment to the crime in such cases has probably encouraged people to think of all punishment as a sort of repayment for wrongdoing—a view which is, however, applicable to few offences other than those against property (no punishment can cancel the loss of a life, a limb, a girl's virginity). The principle of judging the wickedness of the action by the damage done is bound to be abandoned as soon as we come to assign moral merit and demerit to the will and character of the agent, rather than to the consequences of what he does. Then we cannot allow that the careless motorist who knocks down three pedestrians deserves thrice the punishment of him who knocks down one, or the bank robber who gets away with £10,000 a hundred times the punishment of him who only collects £100. The idea of a material equivalence between crime and punishment lingers only in some particularly emotional corners of our moral consciousness, in the tendency to think that death is the uniquely appropriate punishment for murderers, and flogging for cosh-boys.

How then can we measure the moral quality of the guilty will? I think we set about it rather like this. We try, from the circumstances of the offence, to estimate the strength of the offender's inclination to do wrong, and we reckon as most wicked, and deserving of the heaviest punishment, that offender whose inclination to evil, as against contrary inclinations to do right, is the strongest. Thus it takes a stronger appetite for wrongdoing, or a weaker susceptibility to conscientious scruples, to be a ringleader than a follower, to rob a benefactor than to rob a bank, to strike in cold blood than to strike in the heat of passion, to embezzle for the sake of luxury spending than to embezzle for the sake of averting ruin. The logic of "previous good conduct" is similar: it shows that the offender's inclination to wrongdoing is less strong than it might seem, since hitherto he has managed to resist it. "Extenuating circumstances" are always circumstances in which the inducements to do wrong are particularly strong, or the inducements to do right particularly weak. The heaviest punishments are earned by those who most entirely and consistently flout common

<sup>1</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>2</sup> See Piaget, *Moral Judgement of the Child*.

standards. This sort of measure of "moral gravity" is quite often used by persons in authority.

But further reflection takes us yet another step. If differences in external circumstances may alter the assessment of guilt, may not differences in the internal circumstances do the same—I mean differences in the innate and acquired tendencies of character with which a man has to cope? If A has a constitutional craving for alcohol, and B has been brought up in the society of confirmed drunkards, does not sobriety require from them a greater effort of will than from C, who was raised by teetotalers and dislikes beer? And does not this lessen the moral gravity of their offence if they become drunk and disorderly? If in the last analysis moral value belongs only to the will, that is to the effort a man makes towards right living, then we must admit that similar actions and similar dispositions may have different moral values in different persons, and that neither the man who does most harm, nor the man with the most vicious inclinations, is necessarily most deserving of blame and punishment. I think this is the position to which reflection tends to lead us; in judging our own actions at least, we claim most merit for those good deeds which it cost us the greatest effort to do, we excuse ourselves most readily for those bad deeds which it would have cost the greatest effort to avoid. But if this intensity of moral effort made or omitted is the real bearer of moral merit and demerit, it is a quantity which God might conceivably measure, but we certainly cannot. It is an impossible foundation for a penal system.

When we have got this far, we can hardly avoid having doubts whether there is really any quantity of moral desert to be measured at all. The more carefully we investigate the conditions of human action, the more elusive "moral gravity" becomes. And as we come to think of human actions as the outcome of previous causes, as we find ourselves saying "There, but for the grace of God (or the luck of the draw) go I," we tend to lose the attitude of mind to which the idea of retribution appeals. "Tout comprendre est tout pardonner" is false if it means that understanding of causes and motives necessarily makes us more lenient; we may still think it right to punish an offender, perhaps severely, for the sake of others, or even for his own. What is true is that the growth of understanding normally brings with it a diminution of indignation, which draws much of its power from our horror of the unfamiliar. And when we no longer feel indignation, though we may still wish to punish, we do not wish to punish retributively.

*University of Birmingham.*

C. H. WHITELEY.

# PHILOSOPHICAL SURVEY

## PHILOSOPHY IN FRANCE

In fact, only one book on or around Marxism has been received for survey during the year that is past, though there are perhaps few British philosophers who would see anything for surprise or regret in that. Among the books not received, however, are two of very considerable interest and intelligence, which it would be wrong not to mention for the sake of anyone who may be unaware of their existence; Merleau Ponty's *Les aventures de la dialectique* and Raymond Aron's *L'opium des intellectuels*. Both books appeared at roughly the same time as a British critic was rash enough publicly to lament that political philosophy was dead in France. Quite apart from anything else, this seems an odd complaint of a country in which Marxism, be it for better or for worse, is very much a live intellectual influence. Classical Marxism may indeed be what Professor Acton calls "a philosophical farrago," but it would be a bad mistake to treat it as no more than a dead doctrinal body, to be dissected and preserved, if at all, as simply an historical curiosity. What the intellectuals of the world's next generation or two will be saying may be anybody's guess; but that a very large proportion of them will be saying it in Marxist or Marxist-derived terminology seems a safe prediction. When for any reason a certain vocabulary is placed beyond the bounds of critical questioning, all development must take the form of interpretation and application. But to say this is very different from saying that all development is brought to a halt. This is a situation that tends to be peculiarly irritating to the critic; there is an almost overwhelming temptation to regard one's opponent as a fraud, who slips dishonestly from one position to another, even perhaps appropriating some of the critic's own weapons, while yet maintaining that he is still what he said he was at the beginning. An opponent who will stick to one fundamental orthodoxy is so much more satisfactory. Marxism, however, is a doctrine peculiarly likely to go through far-reaching changes within the framework of a superficially unchanging vocabulary. And since there are after all many Marxists who are by no means fools, to follow such developments may be worth while not only for the reason that to do so may be a necessary condition of any real intellectual contact—though this is surely a good enough reason in itself.

As far as the two books just mentioned are concerned, since, as I have said, neither has been received for survey and since anyhow both have already attracted a good deal of attention in this country, there is no need to discuss them here; except perhaps to remark that Aron's methods are far more straightforward than Merleau Ponty's, and to add by the way that the latter produced in the journal *Express*, while it was still a weekly, a most ingenious interpretation of the policies of the East German régime in terms of the dialectic. (I should say too that both books are, of course, anti-Marxist in their respective ways.) The book that has been received is *Le Marxisme* by Henri Arvon (Armand Colin), a short and readable, though not simple, introduction to the subject. It might well make an excellent introductory companion to Professor Acton's work on the same subject, different as the two books are. Where Acton tells the reader what the Marxist theses are and what are their pros and cons, Arvon leads him into them. Though he is by no means totally uncritical, he gives a more sympathetic account and catches in a

way something more of the flavour of Marxism. This is probably partly because he sets out at once from the standpoint of the Hegelian dialectic and the notion of alienation; and in part too the result of a selection and presentation that constantly emphasize the way in which the "human situation" in its various aspects forms the focus of Marxist preoccupations. Arvon's exposition, which does not, needless to say, cover entirely the same ground as Acton's, is doubtless far less analytically lucid and precise; it is anyhow a good deal shorter. On the other hand it expresses something of the nature, and hence the feel of possible future developments, of Marxist thinking that one might be less likely to get from a work in which Marxism is in effect expertly taken to pieces. Both approaches are surely of equal importance.

About *Pouvoir politique et pouvoir spirituel*, by Joseph Ohana (Marcel Rivière, Paris), I found it hard to make up my mind. Its main theme is a plea for the adoption of a creed of spiritual values—as opposed to political values, perfectly proper in their necessary sphere of ways and means—conceived not as objective things-in-themselves, but as ideals of reason, elaborated as a result of reflection on the unifying tendencies inherent in human nature as a whole; although a few devoted men might live as witnesses to these values, they are for the majority like signposts to an ideal that could not possibly be realized in practice. But first is needed a thorough-going rejection of all accepted systems. This the author seems to carry through somewhat too thoroughly for his own subsequent purposes. For his refusal to admit any felt certainty of belief can hardly be turned aside merely by asserting that it is obvious that human nature is directed by some intelligent agent. This is a strange book, at times wild, at times cranky, but at times also extremely shrewd and in any and every case clear and to its point. There are some acute and provocative criticisms of Kantian and Intuitionist ethics, of Utilitarianism, Marxism and the Catholic Church; and the whole discussion is invigorated by an active concern with the real life problems and behaviour of ordinary people in this modern age. (It is odd, though, given the general tenor of the book, that no mention at all is made of Hume.) All in all, despite its incoherence, it is in parts so stimulating as to be well worth reading.

Georges Vlachos, on the other hand, has written a whole *Essai sur la politique de Hume* (Institut Français Athènes and Domat-Montchrestien, Paris), an examination of Hume's view on politics throughout the entire range of his works. It is difficult not to feel that despite his obvious intent to be fair, Vlachos is basically out of sympathy with Hume and sometimes goes unnecessarily out of his way to prise open the possible inconsistencies when no greater ingenuity exercised in the opposite direction might have bound them together. On the whole that considerable part of his book which deals with the essays and the history is the more interesting and he brings out well the way in which Hume fluctuates between a view of experience as full of limitless variation and one of political science as founded on a few simple generalizations of more or less a priori psychology. Among other points worthy of note is, too, the discussion of the relations between Hume's political theories and his political sympathies. Again this is a clear and stimulating book and one that by and large is well worth the reading.

Among the works received from Messrs. Gauthier-Villars is a very welcome new edition of *Les fondements logiques des mathématiques* by Professor E. W. Beth. This is in every way an improvement on what was already a very valuable book. The content has been revised and brought up to date, the index enlarged, the format overhauled and the little booklet of errata

and addenda absorbed into the text. In particular, as Professor Beth points out, Book III on formalized axiomatics has been thoroughly recast. In fact, the only drawback is the inevitable increase in price to almost twice what it was. Of J. Barkley Rosser's *Deux esquisses de logique* Mr. G. B. Keene reports as follows: "The first section of this monograph contains a neat presentation of two alternative axiomatizations of combinatory logic (consistency proofs for them have been given by Curry), demonstrates their equivalence to Church's calculus of lambda-conversion and shows how general recursive functions can be defined in the latter. Slight disappointment may, however, be felt over a paragraph headed 'Chapter 5.' Here our interest is chiefly aroused by a final note to the effect that the possibility of setting up a theory of deduction on the basis of lambda-conversion is at present being worked out by Curry and Feys. But nothing further is said, even about the general outline of such a programme. The treatment is detailed and rigorous although at times the author lapses, a little inconsistently, into an almost elementary tone of exposition. In the second section, for instance, we are given an account of the concept of 'model' in formal logic which could safely have been assumed to be unnecessary for readers able to follow the subsequent more technical discussion. Then follow sketches of some important (including some fairly recent) consistency proofs in mathematical logic. Of particular value is a short section relating the Löwenheim-Skolem theorem to a recent theorem of Heyting and Rosser, namely, that every consistent logic has a non-normal model. One would like to have seen a fuller discussion of the implications of this proof with respect to the formal adequacy of all axiom-sets for the natural numbers. The monograph is well up to the standard set by its predecessors in this series."

*Traité de la connaissance* by Louis Rougier contains, by contrast, some strange lapses from the Gauthier-Villars standard. It is in many ways, a curious book altogether. Its general standpoint might be described as that of the orthodoxy of the American branch of the later Vienna Circle. There is a good deal of reference to recent work in mathematical logic, but none to that of the second Wittgenstein and his followers. Its purpose is an exposition of this particular empiricist theory of knowledge—though the author is distinctly uneasy about the title of empiricist—knowledge being limited, of course, almost entirely to questions of logic, mathematics, language and science. The exposition takes place on a bewildering variety of levels and thus tends at times to take on the air of an anthology. From the point of view of philosophers in this country, the ground covered is nearly always familiar and not infrequently out of date; yet the author is probably not unjustified in describing his thought as "non-conformist" as far as most French audiences are concerned. Certainly it is refreshing to find a French philosopher insisting on the importance of the distinction between synthetic and analytic propositions and that of exposing nonsensical pseudo-propositions about nothingness. These are wholly admirable sentiments. But it is disconcerting at the least to come across a wild inaccuracy and inconsistency scattered throughout the book. To mention four examples only. There are a series of transpositions between such terms as "disjunction," "conjunction," "sum," "product," "addition" and "multiplication." On page 121 the list of the sixteen possible compound propositions based on the truth-table of two propositions "p" and "q" would be accurate enough if the second and third lines of the table on which the list is based had been the other way round; (as they are in fact in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*). As the list stands it can only baffle the uninitiated; for others there

could anyhow be no need to write out such a list. The term "propositional function" is used in various unusual ways (for example, page 257). And, less important but by no means untypical, Edward Caird, or what I presume to be Edward Caird, turns up in a list of the neo-Hegelians as "des deux Caire"!

"Edmond Barbotin," Mr. Eric Hill reports, "has already edited for posthumous publication a brief history by O. Hamelin of Aristotle's theory of the intellect as interpreted by later commentators and now he has himself undertaken in *La théorie aristotélicienne de l'intellect d'après Théophraste* (Vrin, Paris), a full examination of Theophrastus' views on the matter. Barbotin argues that Theophrastus' witness must be of prime importance since he was Aristotle's intimate disciple and his immediate successor as head of the Lyceum. The thirteen fragments of Theophrastus on the subject are printed in an appendix with critical apparatus, careful textual notes and a translation. Barbotin does not claim that Theophrastus' evidence brings any great flood of light into the obscurity of Aristotle's theory of the active and passive intellects and of the origin and fate of the soul. In fact it mainly confirms the well-known inconclusiveness of Aristotle's own writings upon the subject. Later syncretist commentators like Themistius and Priscian tried to tie up the loose ends by accommodating Aristotle's views to those of Plato and the neo-Platonists, but Theophrastus recognized the "De Anima" for what it was, the unfinished grappling of a great mind with a great problem. This is a scholarly and valuable work. There are excellent indices and a full bibliography.

*L'être et la forme selon Platon* (Museum Lessianum), by R. Loriaux is a study of the Platonic dialect, about half the book being devoted to the 'ascending' form and half to the 'descending' form. In his exposition, accompanied by lengthy analysis of the relevant dialogues, he goes over much familiar ground without contributing anything particularly new. The book is clearly written, but can hardly be considered important."

Fr. Duyckaerts, in *La notion de Normal en psychologie clinique* (Vrin, Paris), discusses four main candidates for a definition of "normal" before putting forward his own. These are the ideas of "integration," "independence" or "autonomy," "adaptation" and the "average man." The author's own view is that "it seems legitimate to consider as normal the man whose individual and social life is orientated in a creative direction." His activity must be purposeful, but of a positive kind and not simply limited to the "avoidance of frustration." Duyckaerts is anxious to avoid the mistake of defining any particular type of action as normal or abnormal irrespective of circumstances; to judge of an agent's state of mental health one must know not just what he did, but also why he did it. Fair enough, no doubt; but then just what is one saying when one talks of creative activity? To quote Duyckaerts again: "We consider an individual to be creative . . . who is capable of conducting himself according to the physiological, psychic, social and cultural data which form the whole of his phenomenal field." This could mean anything—or nothing. Still, the book as a whole provides an interesting discussion of a most important topic, sharpened by a general awareness of the practical necessity of deciding what conditions are so abnormal as to call for treatment and at what such treatment is to aim. The book, I take it, is primarily directed to anyone concerned with psychology, but there is a good deal in it which may be of interest to philosophers too.

Every year I end by finding myself overcome with remorse at the books that I have neither space nor competence to discuss and this year the

# PHILOSOPHY

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situation is somewhat worse than usual. The following at any rate must at least be mentioned; their titles will have to speak for themselves. *Marsile Ficin et l'art*, by André Chastel (Droz, Geneva and Giard, Lille); *Erasme et l'Italie*, by Augustin Renaudet (Droz); *La philosophie néerlandaise au siècle d'or*—Tome I, *L'enseignement philosophique dans les universités à l'époque précartesienne (1575–1650)*, by Paul Dibon, (Elsevier); and *Les relations intellectuelles de Locke avec la France*, by Gabriel Bonno (University of California Press), which makes use of the Locke papers at the Bodleian. These are all scholar's books and certainly demand the attention of anyone interested in the relevant special subjects.

ALAN MONTEFIORE

## NEW BOOKS

*Ethics.* By A. C. EWING, M.A., D.Phil., F.B.A., Litt.D. (London: English Universities Press. Pp. vii x 183.)

This little book is intended for beginners, and the beginner who reads it can hardly fail to come away with two impressions. The first is that ethics is a much simpler subject than it really is; for Ewing writes with great clarity and the general arrangement is logical. "Ethics is concerned with two main kinds of questions, first, with deciding the general principles on which ethical terms are to be applied to anything, and secondly with deciding precisely what these terms mean." Nothing could be clearer. Various ethical theories, Egoistic Hedonism, Utilitarianism (both hedonistic and ideal), the theories of Kant, Ross and Moore are passed in review and, with greater or less hesitation, condemned. But when we look for positive answers to the two main types of question we find, as readers of Ewing's other books will expect, that there is only one principle on which we apply ethical terms; we apply them to the things to which they obviously apply. The attempt to answer the second question simply peters out when it has been shown that at least some ethical terms are indefinable. This is a pity; since the realization that some ethical terms are indefinable might lead, not to the conclusion that it is obvious what they mean, but to the investigation of methods other than that of definition for elucidating their meaning. Ewing, like Moore, passes from "indefinable" through "simple" to "understood without investigation."

The second impression that the novice cannot fail to get is that "philosophers" (very few are named) must have been quite extraordinarily foolish. Their theories topple like nine-pins before the tritest moral observations. Thus Egoistic Hedonism is refuted by pointing out that if it were true we should have to pass a favourable verdict on a man who wantonly started a civil war in order to gratify a death-bed desire for revenge. Since "we" should obviously not approve of this, egoistic hedonism must be false. Ewing has failed to notice an assumption which underlies this refutation. He starts the chapter, properly enough, as follows: "One of the first questions that presents itself in ethics is—Why ought I to sacrifice myself for the sake of somebody else?" But the question he actually answers is "Do we approve of those who are consistently selfish?" It is not surprising that Ewing should find this latter question easy to answer; what is incredible is that he should think it relevant. Almost every moral philosopher of standing has thought it incumbent on him to come to grips with egoistic hedonism, and many have refuted it with so little success that they have been accused of being egoistic hedonists themselves. They have found the task of refutation difficult partly because they have been deliberately playing a philosophical game in which no moral judgment is allowed to count as "obvious," but mainly because they have refused to make Ewing's assumption, viz.: that if it is obvious to Ewing and me and John Doe that Richard Roe ought not to do a certain thing, Richard Roe himself must be convinced that he ought not to do it as soon as this is pointed out. Philosophical egoism is precisely the rejection of this assumption; which is why Plato, for example, found it so difficult to deal with. But Ewing, like Cephalus, leaves the discussion just where it begins to get difficult.

The attempts to define "good" and "ought" which Ewing mentions and dismisses are likewise travesties of philosophical theories. Did any philosopher ever say that "good" meant what the speaker or what the majority approves

of? The first is clearly a dig at Hobbes; but there is all the difference in the world between Ewing's version and Hobbes's "whatsoever is the object of a man's desire, that is it which *he for his part calleth good.*" Hobbes is talking about first person statements; his theory can only be translated into the impersonal mode if you assume, as Ewing does, that "this is good" is logically analogous to "this is square." And this is exactly what Hobbes denies, as he makes abundantly clear. Of course you can refute a subjectivist "definition" of good, if you assume that "good" is the name of an objective property. The second (majority) definition is usually fathered on Hume; but I am glad to say that Ewing leaves it fatherless. The usual laugh about statistics is a laugh at nobody's expense.

There is something very like an inconsistency between Ewing's rejection of these definitions and his frequent use of an appeal to what the reader finds or "we" find obvious as a criterion for applying moral words. Granted that a criterion is not a definition; yet it would seem that every argument against the proposed definitions can be used against the application of the corresponding criteria. Ewing would surely not admit that the fact that I think it obvious that something is right is a conclusive proof that it is right; nor is the fact that many or most men find it obviously right.

Both sets of arguments seem valid against any of the over-simplified theories that Ewing examines; and both ignore the insights which such theories enshrine. The jejune truth underlying all subjectivist and intuitionist theories is that when I make up my mind that I ought to do something *I* make up *my* mind. It is analytic that when I have considered all the relevant facts and moral principles bearing on the situation that occur to me there is no further criterion that *I* can apply. And the rather less jejune truth underlying objectivist and majority theories is that our moral language, unlike our talk about matters of taste, presupposes a background of general agreement.

Ewing ignores throughout the discoveries (if that is not too question-begging a word) of modern logic. He hardly considers the possibility that we might have many different criteria for applying moral words no one of which is necessary or sufficient; he ignores the multiplicity of uses to which moral words are put, and he ignores the multiplicity of the words themselves. The rich and varied vocabulary of words and locutions which go to make up our actual moral discourse is reduced to "good," "right" and "ought"; and these three can, it seems, be shuffled at will. For example, in dismissing utilitarianism on the usual grounds that it fails to square with the moral judgments that "we" actually make, he uses the phrase "all but the very poor ought to give much more money to charity than on the average they do." But this "ought" covers at least two very different things: (1) "It would be a good thing if all but the very poor, etc. . . ." and (2) "All but the very poor are under an obligation, etc. . . ."

It might be said that the faults that I have noticed are inevitable in a short introductory book. The book is less than two hundred pages long and it is a considerable achievement to have covered so much of the subject so lucidly in so small a space. But if the over-simplification imposed by the purpose of the book necessarily leads to travesty—and I think it does—this is an argument against the writing of any book on ethics within such limitations. It is indeed a problem how students who lack the advantage of Socratic discussion with a tutor can best be introduced to ethics, or indeed to any branch of philosophy. Ewing's book has great merits; it is admirably clear and it makes no attempt to exploit a misconception common among beginners that philosophy is a peculiarly grand and mysterious subject. But

it will be of use to a student if and only if he has the wit to see that neither the theories examined nor the arguments used against them are as simple as Ewing makes out, the pertinacity to pursue the theories and arguments further and the curiosity to examine the original texts.

P. H. NOWELL-SMITH.

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*The Province of Jurisprudence Determined, etc.* By JOHN AUSTIN. With an introduction by Professor H. L. A. Hart. (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1954. Price 12s. 6d. net.)

*The Province of Jurisprudence Determined* (the first ten of Austin's lectures as Professor of Jurisprudence at the University of London in 1828) was originally published, through the efforts of his wife Sarah, in 1832. In his Preface Austin emphasized that these ten lectures were to be regarded as a detached and preliminary treatise to the main work. Nothing else appeared during the rest of his life, save one political pamphlet, and a couple of articles. In 1834 he gave a shorter course of lectures at Lincoln's Inn, covering very much the same ground as the earlier University of London lectures; but they were not just the same lectures over again, as Professor Hart seems to suggest. Austin intended to work the two courses up into a single, comprehensive treatise on general jurisprudence and ethics, but he did not live to do it. However, he left sufficiently clear indications of his plan for Sarah to be able to consolidate the two courses into the *Lectures on Jurisprudence*, published in 1863.

The other essay contained in the present volume, *On the Uses of the Study of Jurisprudence*, also published posthumously, was put together by Sarah Austin from the opening lectures of each of his two main courses, and provides a very brief summary of them, in which Austin lays down what he thinks jurisprudence to be, and why the study of it should be the initial grounding of all lawyers, practical as well as academic.

The works here reprinted, therefore, offer to the modern reader almost all the essentials, and much of the detail, of Austin's account of jurisprudence, within the covers of a single, conveniently small, and very modestly priced book.

As Professor Hart indicates in his short but valuable introduction Austin's lectures present us with two questions. First a general question, whether he was right to maintain that common to all actual and possible legal systems there must be a body of underlying notions and principles, which will be the subject-matter of general jurisprudence—this being the "science of positive law as it is," to be contrasted with "the science of legislation, or of positive law as it *ought* to be." If he was right, then general jurisprudence must be an analytical, as contrasted with an historical, study of what is essential to the idea of man in society; and, as Professor Hart suggests, the outcome of such a study could hardly be so very far away from the theories of Natural Law which Austin himself so violently opposed. The second and more particular question will be whether Austin has picked out the right notions to be the basic notions of a general jurisprudence. The answer here could be more confidently negative. Austin's two basic (but not indefinable) concepts, *Command* and *Habit of Obedience*, would not now receive assent, for they make the essential facts about a law, or a body of law, to be simply that it is what is willed or desired by someone, and that that someone shall be a *sovereign* person or corporation. For Austin an independent political society is a group of persons generally in the habit of obedience to a sovereign; and a sovereign is a person or body of persons receiving such obedience, but not in turn in the habit of paying it to

a further superior. Nowadays we should be more likely to say that the legality of laws is to be determined, not by their having been ordered by a determinate person or group of persons, but by their conformity with what Professor Hart, following Kelsen, calls a constitutional rule. Not that the Austinian view is entirely false. If its two key concepts are supplemented by a third, which might be called something like *Common Purpose*, then the application of his scheme to certain activities of limited appeal and jurisdiction, such as those of organized games, is not altogether inappropriate. Although even here some reference to the constitutional rule may be needed, it plays a less emphatic role than the fact that M.C.C. or the R.F.U. are the governing bodies of their games. But, unfortunately for Austin, the state is not simply M.C.C. writ large.

To have reprinted these works is to have performed a valuable service not only to jurists but also to political philosophers. For, while the influence of Austin during the last hundred years has been continuous, it has been acknowledged for the most part through the agency of his critics. With this new edition now available, the longwindedness of Austin's full lectures can no longer provide a decent excuse for failing to read him.

A. D. WOOLLEY.

*American Thought: A Critical Sketch.* By M. R. Cohen (edited by F. S. Cohen).  
(The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois. 1954. pp. 360. Price \$5.00.)

It is unfortunate that Morris Raphael Cohen did not live to complete his projected history of American thought. With his rare combination of wide reading and philosophical clear-headedness he would undoubtedly have produced a book of outstanding importance. For too much of the work that others have done in this field (like H. W. Schneider's *History of American Philosophy* or Eric Goldman's *Rendezvous with Destiny*) is rendered infuriating by oversimplified classifications and superficial appraisals. As it is, however, we must be content with the drafts on various relevant topics which Felix S. Cohen edited from his father's posthumous papers before his own untimely death in 1953. And the resultant book is naturally of somewhat uneven merit.

The chapters on the background of the American tradition, on legal thought, and on aesthetics are, I think, the best in the book. The chapter on American ideas of history contains a useful survey of various attitudes and approaches to history which have been adopted in America. But it omits to mention the history of ideas movement, in which Cohen himself took part and A. O. Lovejoy was perhaps the prime mover. The chapter on religious thought has an interesting account of more recent developments but is strikingly deficient for the pre-revolutionary period. Jonathan Edwards, for instance, is mentioned several times in passing, but his theology is nowhere discussed in detail. There is no chapter at all about ethics: Henry George is barely mentioned. The chapter on general philosophy seems the least adequate to its topic. The period covered is from Fiske and Chauncey Wright, at one end, to Lewis and Whitehead, at the other. The New England transcendentalists are thus omitted altogether from this survey, though they are occasionally mentioned in other parts of the book. Contributions to mathematical logic by others than Peirce, Lewis and Sheffer are not mentioned at all, nor are any of the various forms of analytical philosophy, nor the resurrection in America of the movement for the unity of science. Of course, in the circumstances none of these omissions can be blamed either on the author or on the editor. But they do diminish the book's value for those not already familiar with the main developments in its field. The book

might perhaps have been made more useful as an introductory survey if the editor had indicated the principal gaps that need supplementing from other sources.

The only section where I find the content of Cohen's summaries and criticisms consistently less successful than usual is in his treatment of the philosophers known in America as "neo-realists" and "critical realists." Perhaps he was himself too close to their general point of view to achieve a sufficiently disengaged terminological apparatus for discussing their wrangles about "knowing" and its "objects." What he says about James, Royce, and Dewey is much clearer and more interesting. Indeed, Cohen's writing is for the most part so informed, critical, judicious and lively that for all its incompleteness the book as a whole still deserves a very high place among surveys or histories of reflective thought in the U.S.A.

L. JONATHAN COHEN.

*Pragmatism: Philosophy of Imperialism.* By HARRY K. WELLS. (London: Lawrence & Wishart, Ltd. 1954. Pp. 221. Price 15s.)

According to Mr. Wells, pragmatism is not only wrong; because it substitutes expediency for truth it is also immoral; because it encourages the propagation of falsehoods useful to a minority class, it is pernicious in its effects; and it was deliberately invented by men who knew that it was false, in order to further the interests of the capitalists, whose hired sophists they were.

Few English philosophers would nowadays accept pragmatism. Still fewer, however, would regard it, considered as a statement about truth, and not as a definition of truth, as any more than a harmless platitude, or, at any rate, a rough approximation to accuracy. After all, true beliefs generally are useful, and if I confuse arsenic with sugar, this error is likely to issue in practical mistakes which may be disastrous both for myself and others. Why, then, should pragmatism be the target for such a stream of abuse as is hurled against it in Mr. Wells's book?

The answer is that Mr. Wells grossly misrepresents pragmatism. Pragmatists hold that a proposition is true if it is useful to X that X should believe it. They do not hold that a proposition is true if it is useful to X that Y should believe it. Hence they would hold the proposition "God exists"—belief in which is such an obstacle in the path of the advancing proletariat—to be true only if it were useful to capitalists that *they themselves* should believe it. They would not hold it to be true on the grounds that it was useful to *capitalists* that *communists* should believe it, any more than they would hold it to be true if it were useful to *communists* that *capitalists* should believe it. It is as obvious as anything can be, and no-one to my knowledge has ever denied it, that it would be extremely useful to *capitalists* that *communists* should believe what is *false*, and extremely useful to *communists* that *capitalists* should do the same. It is in terms of its usefulness to the believer, not in terms of its usefulness to the believer's enemies, that pragmatists define truth; but it is this latter view, which is so stupid that it would not merit refutation had it been held, at which Mr. Wells's fire is directed.

Though few would look upon pragmatism as downright immoral, many regard it as ignoble. This attitude to pragmatism I do not myself share. "*Magna est veritas et praevalebit*" is something we should all like to believe. Pragmatists believed it so firmly that they were prepared to define truth in terms of what prevails. Their definition may be erroneous, but let us hope that the confidence on which it was based is not misplaced. Heaven help us all if it is!

JONATHAN HARRISON.

*Moral Rules.* By J. D. MABBOTT. (London, Cumberlege, 1955. Extract from Proceedings of the British Academy for 1953, pp. 97-118. Price 3s. 6d.)

This is the annual philosophical lecture endowed by the Henriette Herz Trust. It examines the status in a theory of ethics of those general moral laws whose apparent obligatoriness in relative independence of consequences constitutes a plausible argument for a Kantian or an intuitionist view. The argument is stated generally in terms of an objectivist ethics, but the author holds that it is mainly independent of the issue as regards objectivity, and he gives interesting examples to show how what he says could be stated in terms of other views. He does, however, also think that the development of his argument ultimately strains any non-objectivist theory severely, so that the latter either must be revised and put in a more complex form than any yet attained or be abandoned (p. 117). What sort of revision, if any, could meet the situation he has not suggested, but he makes it clear that the difficulty arises because such views in their normal form can only admit successful means of persuasion and not good ethical reasons.

The argument proceeds by way of criticism of three alternative theories about moral rules—the self-evidence theory, the empiricist theory, and the utilitarian theory. One of the chief contributions of the author is the clearness with which he brings out the complete inadequacy of a purely empirical theory. For ethical propositions to be mere empirical generalizations it would have to be the case that we approved of particular instances of promise-keeping or disapproved of particular acts which inflicted pain independently of any recognition that a promise had been made or that the acts gave pain, and merely noted that they in fact had the common character of promise-keeping or pain-inflicting without feeling directly in any way that that was the reason which made us approve or disapprove of them (pp. 100-1). The case against utilitarianism is also stated very effectively except that no attention is given to a utilitarian who should reply that promise-keeping was good-in-itself and that its *prima facie* rightness depended on its goodness. There remains the intuitionist theory, which, as Mr. Mabbott admits, is much more plausible if it is not claimed that the intuitively known laws command in each case a particular kind of action without exception but only that they are *prima facie* duties. Whether this view is right or not, the main argument which Mr. Mabbott brings against it seems to me to fail. It is to the effect that the rules deemed to be self-evident vary with different civilizations and even with different individuals in the same civilization. Mr. Mabbott admits that in many cases this can be explained by differences as to matters of fact, but he denies (reasonably) that this is so in all. However (1) I do not see that it is necessary to the view to hold that all men agree about the rules. Moral insight may be a developing faculty, indeed one would expect it to be so. (2) The instances selected are unsatisfactory. Certainly the differences between the conscientious objector and his judges or between people who think suicide sometimes right and those who think it is always wrong (p. 99) is not in general reducible to a dispute merely as to matters of fact, but both parties at least would admit that war and suicide are *prima facie* wrong. Even the most hardened militarist would not defend starting a war if there was not some sort of ulterior reason for it. Consequently these belong to the class of disputes which Sir David Ross always regarded as incapable of certain decision, i.e. disputes as to which of two conflicting *prima facie* duties was more binding.

Mr. Mabbott's own theory is that the obligatoriness of the moral laws can be established only by asking what would happen if most people disobeyed them but asking this question with more regard to consequences than did Kant. In other words our author is ultimately a utilitarian in the sense that

the justification of a law of action is based on the good its general observance does, but not a utilitarian as regards particular actions. It may be right to do more harm than good if we are acting in accord with a good general law. A number of difficult questions remain outstanding. In particular—Why should I refrain from doing good by breaking a law merely because it would do great harm if most people broke it, which there is no prospect of their doing, at any rate as a result of my action? And is it less difficult to be an intuitionist about what is intrinsically good, which Mr. Mabbott must be to establish his rules, than about what is right? His lecture is lucid and stimulating, but we are painfully aware of the limits of space which prevent him from further discussing these questions. It is much to be hoped that he will some time produce a full-scale book on ethics.

A. C. EWING.

*Sense without Matter, or Direct Perception.* A. A. LUCE. (Nelson. Pp. ix, 165.)

Dr. Luce, who is well known to all philosophers for his life-long devotion to the study of Berkeley and for his valuable contributions to Berkeley scholarship, has published in this little book a lively and spirited attack on "matter" from the Berkeleyan point of view. Like his master, Dr. Luce writes in an admirably simple clear style, with the minimum of technicalities, and the book can be recommended as an attractive introduction for the layman to some important aspects of Berkeley's philosophy. In this review I shall confine my remarks to a few selected topics.

(i) *Matter.* As Dr. Luce points out, "matter" is a highly ambiguous word. In one sense it is a common name for such objects of actual or possible sense-perception as trees, stones, drops of water, clouds, etc. In that sense its use implies no theory, and anyone who believes that there are things answering to such names may be said to "believe in the existence of matter." Let us call this "matter in the *empirical* sense." At the opposite extreme "matter" is used to denote the supposed *substratum* in which all the qualities, dispositional properties, and variable states of any bit of "matter," in the empirical sense, are held to *inhere*. In that sense its use implies a certain metaphysical theory, and anyone who finds that theory unintelligible or incredible may be said to "disbelieve in the existence of matter." Let us call this "matter in the *Aristotelian* sense." Dr. Luce, like everyone else, accepts the existence of matter in the empirical sense. He says that he is concerned only to deny the existence of matter in the Aristotelian sense.

Now it is plain that there are intermediate possibilities. Suppose we ask ourselves, e.g., the question: Did Leibniz accept or reject the existence of matter? (i) Certainly he would have agreed that there are objects which we do or could perceive with our senses, and that the names "tree," "stone," "cloud," etc., can properly be applied to certain of them. (ii) Certainly he would have rejected matter in the Aristotelian sense. (iii) But it is also certain that he held that what a person perceives, when he would correctly and truly be said to be "seeing and touching a stone," is profoundly unlike what that person perceives it as being. He perceives it as brown and cold and roughly spherical and hard and massive. But in fact, according to Leibniz, what he perceives has and can have none of these properties. It has other properties, completely different from and incompatible with these, which he does not perceive it as having, viz., the property of being a collection of highly confused minds whose "points of view" all fall within certain narrow limits. We may put the case as follows. "Matter" in the empirical sense has a certain generally

accepted (if vaguely formulated) *connotation* as well as a generally accepted *denotation*, and so we must distinguish between what I will call the *purely ostensive* and the *connotative* aspects of the empirical sense of "matter." Leibniz accepted the existence of matter in the purely ostensive empirical sense of that word; he rejected its existence, not only in the Aristotelian sense, but also in the connotative empirical sense.

The above distinction is highly relevant to Dr. Luce's position. For an essential part of his doctrine is the positive contention that matter, in the purely ostensive empirical sense, has the properties which we perceive it as having, i.e. that there is matter in the *connotative* empirical sense.

There is another distinction which needs to be drawn, and which Dr. Luce seems often to ignore. We must distinguish between "material substance" in the Aristotelian sense of a *substratum* in which certain qualities and dispositions inhere and certain events occur, and "material substance" in one at least of the senses in which Kant used the term "*thing-in-itself*." In the latter sense a "material substance" means the supposed *common source* of certain recurrent bundles of actual and possible sensations, such that when one of them occurs in a person's experience he would claim correctly to be perceiving a certain empirical material substance, e.g. the Albert Memorial. It is easy to see that the two notions of *substratum* and of *thing-in-itself* are fundamentally different, even if both should be chimerical. In the first place, a *thing-in-itself*, in the above sense, would have dispositional properties and variable occurrent states; therefore, if the Aristotelian doctrine of substance were correct, there would be *within it* the distinction of substratum and accidents. Secondly, there would be no logical inconsistency in combining the Aristotelian account of substance with a naïvely realistic account of sense-perception. On that combination of views, when a person perceives with his senses an empirical material substance, he is perceiving a certain *substratum* as having those very qualities which in fact inhere in it, and as undergoing those very changes which in fact are occurring in it, independently of whether he or anyone else should happen to be perceiving them.

Dr. Luce constantly twists matter, in the *Aristotelian* sense, with being something in principle imperceptible. This would be true, I think, of matter in the sense of *thing-in-itself*. But, if the Aristotelian doctrine of substance were combined, as it might logically be, with a realist account of sense-perception, matter in the Aristotelian sense, so far from being in principle imperceptible, would be precisely what a person *is* perceiving whenever he sees or touches or tastes or smells a body.

(2) *Diversity of Visual and Tactual Sense-data.* Dr. Luce, like Berkeley, takes for granted that anything which a person literally *sees* or could see must be numerically diverse from anything which a person literally *touches* or could touch. I do not find this self-evident, and I do not know how it could be proved. Berkeley's own argument for it has always seemed to me weak. It seems to me that it is here that the Berkelian doctrine plainly comes in conflict with what common sense uncritically takes for granted. I do not regard this as a conclusive objection to the doctrine itself; but it is an objection to the claim that there is no conflict between the Berkelian and the plain man.

(3) *Causation.* In Chapter V Dr. Luce explains and defends Berkeley's doctrine of causation. According to this, the word "cause" is ambiguous. In one sense it means *efficient cause*, and Dr. Luce describes an efficient cause as that which "makes changes begin to be." In the other sense it means a perceptible event which is a reliable sign of another such event. It is held to be self-evident that nothing can be an efficient cause except a mind exercising volition. God is a persistent efficient cause, and each of us is from time to time

an efficient cause in a small way. Dr. Luce says that in us "feeling of effort, be it muscular, mental, or mixed, is the index of . . . causal power."

Much has been written on this topic from Hume's time to the present day, and Dr. Luce does not here consider the objections which have been raised or the answers which have been proposed. I will content myself here with the following two remarks. (i) Is it an accurate account of the agency which Berkeleyans ascribe to God to say that he "makes changes begin to be"? I should have thought not. (ii) In the case of a finite person who at a certain moment makes a voluntary movement of his body or voluntarily calls up an image, how far is it correct to say that he "makes a change begin to be"? Only, I should have thought, in a secondary sense. What he does, surely, is to make a modification in a process of change which is already going on independently of his volition, e.g. in the electric currents in his brain or in the course of his thoughts.

(4) *Matter and Materialism.* Dr. Luce constantly asserts that the denial of matter in the Aristotelian sense would be the death blow of materialism, and he plainly attaches considerable importance to this implication of his doctrine. I take materialism to be the view that a person's mind and his mental processes are completely and one-sidedly dependent on his brain and nervous system and on physical processes in these. Now of course the empirical facts which seem *prima facie* to support this view are a datum common to all philosophers, which each school of philosophy must interpret in accordance with its own general principles. It seems to me that the mere rejection of matter in the Aristotelian sense would not carry one far in the direction of denying the alleged implication of these facts. The parts of Berkeley's system which would seem to be directly relevant to this end are the following. (i) The doctrine that the only possible efficient causes are minds exercising volition, and that causation in the sense of *de facto* regular sequence presupposes efficient causality at the back of nature as a whole. (ii) The doctrine that anything which is such that it could conceivably be sensed can actually exist when and only when someone is actually sensing it, and the inference that the greater part of nature (including the minute structure and the inner processes of the bodies of finite persons) exists only in so far as it is continually sensed by a non-human mind of superhuman wisdom and power. It is a long step from denying the existence of matter in the Aristotelian sense to establishing these characteristic positive doctrines and seeing exactly what would follow from them. It is perhaps inevitable that in this little book, written mainly for non-expert readers, Dr. Luce has not addressed himself as fully to this task as one could have wished.

C. D. BROAD.

*The Contemplative Activity.* By P. HAEZRAHI. (George Allen and Unwin.  
Pp. 139. Price 12s. 6d.)

These eight lectures are an interesting and ingenious attempt to rehabilitate the Kantian aesthetic. How far they achieve an adequate analysis of our most moving aesthetic experiences everybody must judge for himself.

The style, with several straggling sentences, anacolutha and long parentheses, may have been quite acceptable in good delivery but to a reader is often obstructive.

The thesis is that the pure aesthetic experience is quite devoid of sensuous charm, intellectual concepts—including recognition of resemblance—and of

any emotion except that of delight in the experience. Such experiences may be stimulated by nature, for instance by the spirals of a falling leaf, or by non-representative art. Consequently Dr. Haerzrahi, like Kant, has to maintain that poetry and most art rely on "dependent" beauty, being infected by the adherence of non-aesthetic elements, though "taste on the whole profits by this harmony of the perceptive faculties with reason." Reynolds thought that "The great end . . . is to make an impression on the imagination and the feeling. The imitation of nature frequently does this. Sometimes it fails and something else succeeds." Our author writes "The fox in the contemplated landscape could say 'I am a splash of brownish-red colour.'" And presumably the Sistine Ezekiel could make an analogous boast.

There seem to be two difficulties here not dealt with by either Kant or Dr. Haerzrahi. The first is that every set of sense-impressions which we recognize as a pattern ought to be beautiful. But for me this is wishful thinking. The second is that the artistic imitation or adaptation of natural patterns, say a landscape or sunset, might be at least as purely beautiful as the original. A third objection—that the theory does not cover some of our eminently aesthetic experiences such as those of tragedy or "the starry heavens"—Kant tried to meet by recourse to his two forms of Sublimity, which, far from being mere patterns, satisfy us just by their "formlessness." Here Dr. Haerzrahi goes further. Though most works of art and some natural objects involve emotion for their full appreciation, these are only aesthetic so far as they are "formed" or "mastered" by "elegant" pattern. This conforms the theory closely to Wordsworth's "Emotion recollected in tranquillity" or Croce's "*Contemplative expression* of emotion in a sensuous form." The author's own discussion of the antithesis between form and matter seems less satisfactory than that of A. C. Bradley on "Substance" and "Subject" in his essay on *Poetry for Poetry's Sake*.

Dr. Haerzrahi claims that, once admitting the essentially aesthetic element in art to be pattern, then "the responses to works of art can be graded in order of merit" and "the reasons for so grading them represent objectively valid standards," so that "a poem can be proved good." But I cannot see that this claim is fulfilled. The statement that "an aesthetic experience cannot be mistaken or true" seems inconsistent with the other that "we are interested in the question of *which* objects *ought* to arouse such experience" and also perhaps with a third that wider considerations reduce the margin of error to which the formal aesthetic judgment is prone. The attempt at such proof rests on question-begging terms such as "adequate," "appropriate," "sufficient," "justified."

On p. 107 the printer has substituted for "Trajan" "Trojan."

E. F. CARRITT.

*Robert Grosseteste and the Origins of Experimental Science, 1100-1700.* By  
A. C. CROMBIE. (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1953. Pp. ix + 369.  
Price 35s. net.)

This book, which appears appropriately at the 700th anniversary of the death of Robert Grosseteste, is nevertheless much more than an account of his scientific work and ideas. It relates also in some detail a great deal of the scientific history of the later Middle Ages, with particular reference to the study of optics, and the story is finally brought up to the time of Galileo, Descartes and Newton. In addition to giving an account of the facts, it attempts

an interpretation, its general thesis being "not only that many of the problems which modern analysis seeks to solve are precisely the problems tackled in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but also that many of the answers given at that remote time were precisely those which have been rediscovered only recently after long neglect." The author goes even further, and claims that in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries "a systematic theory of experimental science was understood and practised by enough philosophers for their work to produce the methodological revolution to which modern science owes its origin." He allows that advances were made in the seventeenth century, but holds that these were rather of the nature of details. There was a change from qualitative to quantitative procedures, and apparatus increased in range and precision. "Yet all these were advances in existing practices. The outstanding original contribution of the seventeenth century was to combine experiment with the perfection of a new kind of mathematics and with a new freedom in solving physical problems by mathematical theories, of which the most striking are those of modern dynamics." Grosseteste is hailed as the first to acquire "a clear understanding of the principles of modern experimental science."

It may be said without hesitation that the book is a most valuable and masterly study of its subject. It is the product of wide reading and deep thought, and the presentation is orderly, elegant and interesting. It abounds in valuable references and contains an exhaustive bibliography. No one who has any interest at all in the scientific thought of the Middle Ages can refuse a tribute of admiration and gratitude to Dr. Crombie for making so much material available in so compact a form.

His success in maintaining his thesis, however, is more controversial. His method is, by quotation and exegesis, to show that the conceptions of what is unfortunately called "scientific method" held by Galileo and Newton, which are, in the main, still tenable, are to be found in these earlier writers, and to deduce that what is essential in modern science originated with them. But against this there is one fatal objection. Grosseteste worked in the thirteenth century, and his procedures were followed and developed continuously until the seventeenth, as Crombie shows; but it was not until the seventeenth century that any appreciable progress in scientific knowledge began to be made, and then it went forward with an almost incredible leap and has accelerated its pace ever since. Why did not this happen earlier? If the essence of the matter was known in the thirteenth, why did it wait 400 years to take effect?

The inference is inescapable that something new and vital entered into scientific thought and practice with Galileo. If we want to understand modern science we must discover what that was, and Crombie's method fails because it rests on the assumption that Galileo knew and stated fully what he was doing. This assumption is untenable. It would be strange indeed if, after three centuries of experience of the new philosophy, showing advances beyond anything that could have been conceived when the process started, we were not in a position to understand the character of its origin with a depth and clarity impossible to those who began it. From our present point of view we can see that the impetus given to scientific enquiry in the seventeenth century owed its existence to three factors, each (except the first) depending on the one that preceded it, and each—at any rate in the form in which it was then introduced—absent from the thought and practice of earlier times.

The first and most essential of these factors was the study of the characteristics of the general properties of bodies, irrespective of the particular bodies that manifested them, in contrast to the investigation of the causes of particular

phenomena. The subject of Galileo's study was motion, whether shown by a body in the sky, a stone falling on the Earth, a ship travelling on the sea, a pendulum swinging, or what not. Similarly, later scientists studied heat and not particular hot bodies, electrification and not particular electrified bodies, and so on. In the scholastic philosophy a body in one place moved in one way, and a body in another place moved in another way, a light body moved differently from a heavy body, a body mainly of earth moved differently from a body mainly of air, and so on. It was until the place, the weight, the chemical nature were ignored, and motion studied simply as motion, that any real scientific progress was possible, because there are discoverable laws of motion, of heat, of optics, but no laws of stones, of flames, of rainbows. The study of the particular material object or phenomenon—even if you could learn its cause, which was rare—carried you no further; you had to start *ab initio* with the next object or phenomenon. But a law such as Galileo's and Newton's laws of motion was applicable at one sweep throughout the universe.

Secondly, a general field of study having been isolated, an experiment was made in which the simplest possible example of a phenomenon in that field was chosen to reveal the general underlying regularities. That is the significance of Galileo's experiments with an inclined plane, on the basis of which Newton was able to find a general law applicable to motions of very different kinds in the heavens and on the Earth. Again there is nothing corresponding to this in the Middle Ages. A few experiments of a kind were made, but not experiments in the sense of arranging conditions so that the general phenomenon selected for study appeared in its simplest form. Clearly there could not be, for no general phenomenon was selected for study. Experiments with light passing through globes of water were made to copy the particular phenomenon of the rainbow, not to understand general laws of optics which could be extended to all optical phenomena. For that they were quite unsuited. The modern experimental method, which is essentially that of creating artificial conditions under which the basic characteristics of a general phenomenon can exhibit themselves as free as possible from complicating circumstances, began in the seventeenth century. This statement is not invalidated if an example of a particular experiment is discovered which can be so regarded but was not.

Thirdly, the experiment was so devised as to yield *measures* of the phenomenon studied, and the result was expressed as a relation between measurements. Mathematics was thus brought into the service of science. This was associated with the philosophical belief that the book of Nature is written in the mathematical language (though this is not a necessary association), and this Crombie allows, notwithstanding isolated examples of measurement in earlier times, to have been an innovation of the seventeenth century. But measurement would have lost its chief meaning if it had not been preceded by the selection of the right subject for study and the production of examples of that subject in which the measurements made could be found to stand in a simple mathematical relation to one another. You can measure the flight of a bird as well as the rate of rolling of a sphere down a slope, though the practical difficulties are of course greater, but the result will tell you nothing beyond the behaviour of that particular bird on that particular occasion. The mathematical aspect of science becomes significant only after the more fundamental aspects are understood, though its importance then can hardly be exaggerated. The "outstanding original contribution" of the seventeenth century is outstanding only because it is raised up by the other original contributions on which it rests, which were equally original and far more general since there is much in modern science that is not metrical or even mathematical.

It is impossible, therefore, to concede the claims which Crombie makes for

his heroes. Indeed, his own account makes this clear, for he is at no pains to misrepresent their work. According to Nifo, one of the two sixteenth-century writers with whom, he tells us, the series of pre-Galilean modern scientists culminated, "the object of natural science was to discover the cause of a given observed effect," whereas Galileo put aside "any suggestion that he was going to investigate the cause of the acceleration of natural motion," and "insisted that he intended simply 'to investigate and demonstrate some of the properties of accelerated motion, whatever the cause of this acceleration may be.'" Thus even Galileo's own apprehension of what he was doing differentiates him fundamentally from his forerunners.

On the other hand, however, it must be admitted that the ridicule which has often been poured upon the pre-Galilean workers is unjustified. They wrestled seriously and well with the problems that faced them, and if those problems were unfortunately selected, they were those which they inherited from their Greek mentors. Their failure to make more headway than they did after centuries of effort was doubtless one of the factors that unconsciously induced their successors to try a more excellent way. The success of the seventeenth-century scientists may well have been impossible without experience of the long unavailing labours of Grosseteste and his followers, and we may accord all honour to their spade-work without supposing that they planted the seed as well. Dr. Crombie's admirable book enables us to do this, for the work of those whom he discusses is presented quite independently of his interpretation of it.

HERBERT DINGLE.

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*Sense Perception and Matter.* By MARTIN LEAN. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd. 1953. Pages ix, 217. Price 21s.)

This claims to be a critical analysis of Professor Broad's theory of perception. Mr. Lean sums up his judgment of Broad's discussion in a quotation from Sir Walter Scott, which, as applied to Broad, is in very bad taste, and I hope Mr. Lean is by now ashamed of it.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Lean confines himself in the main to Ch. IV of *The Mind and its Place in Nature*, entitled "Sense Perception and Matter." He refers occasionally to Broad's *Scientific Thought*, but not to any of Broad's later writings on perception. He subjects the chapter to a minute and detailed examination, and in doing so he seems to me to throw a good deal of darkness on what Broad is actually saying.

Broad, for example, notes that in what he calls a perceptual situation (in which a person is perceiving something during a period of time which may be quite short) two elements are always present: (a) what is sensuously manifested at the time and (b) the conviction that what is sensuously manifested is "not isolated and self-subsistent, not completely revealed in all its qualities, but that it is spatio-temporally a part of a larger whole of a certain kind, viz. a certain physical object, and that this whole has other qualities beside those which are sensuously manifested in the perceptual situation."<sup>2</sup> He calls (a) "the objective constituent of the perceptual situation" and (b) "the external reference of the situation."

He then goes on to rule out certain possible views about how (b) is related to

<sup>1</sup> He "coins new phrases

And vends them forth as knaves vend gilded counters,

"The Mind and its Place in Nature, p. 151. Which wise men scorn, and fools accept in payment." (Lean, p. 207.)

(a), insisting that it is not psychologically an inference from (a), and that it could not be logically justified by inference from (a). If we try to explain it as a logical inference we shall at best arrive only at a hypothesis that there are physical objects, and not at the actual conviction we do have about them. This seems to me what he is saying on p. 152. He makes it more explicit later on, when he says our conviction is not reached by inference, even though it can be defended by inference on later reflexion (208); and he drives home his point by describing the notion of a physical object as a Category, defined by Postulates (217).

Mr. Lean interprets this as saying the very thing Broad is denying. According to him, Broad treats "the relationship between perception and physical objects, as a whole, as though it were like the relationship between the scientist's observations and the hypothetical causes he infers" (Lean, 88) and as "maintaining that the notion of persistent physical objects is merely a hypothesis to explain the correlations between our perceptual experiences" (96). He even quotes Broad's account of the notion as a "Category... defined by Postulates," in confirmation of his interpretation: all of which seems to me a complete misunderstanding of Broad.

In his footnote on p. 110, he confuses Broad's "perceptual situation" with his "objective constituent of a perceptual situation," and this seems to explain some of his misunderstandings.

He is very careless in his references to Broad. On p. 102, e.g., he says, "Broad wants to say that the situation called 'seeing a lamp' amounts merely to having a visual experience.... Further attempts at visual inspection yield only more of the same type of perceptual experiences. Thus, one can at best have only a succession of perceptual experiences, the objective constituents of which cannot be properly called a lamp." It is only a hypothesis that these reveal a physical object.

Broad's own statement I have referred to shows that he doesn't "want to say" anything of the sort. On p. 103 Mr. Lean has turned it into "he wants to say that we are merely having successions of perceptual experiences," and then goes on to ask, "But what is the relevance of the word 'merely'?" Two sentences later, it becomes "If we omit the word 'merely,' on the other hand, his statement is a truism." Whose statement? one wants to know. Broad's? The whole thing is an invention of Mr. Lean.

He does this kind of thing far too often. On p. 185 he admits that he can find no clear statement in Broad's writings concerning the temporal period during which one can properly be said to be "seeing the same sensum."<sup>1</sup> But he thinks it should follow from what Broad says that our sense experiences must be different from moment to moment, and that hence we cannot ever see the same sensum from moment to moment (though on p. 187 he quotes a passage in which Broad says that "the numerical diversity of two objective constituents is... no bar to complete identity of their actual or apparent qualities"—where Broad is speaking of two perceptual situations which are contiguous in time).

By p. 190 Mr. Lean's conjecture has become "Dr. Broad's view that... the objective constituents of our own perceptual situations are 'momentary, fleeting particulars'" and by pp. 191-2 he has gone even further. Discussing the question whether there could be any theoretical significance in saying that a sensum had qualities we failed to notice (as Broad suggested), and other questions which Mr. Lean thinks are bound up with this, he says, "But of course Dr. Broad insists that he does not *know* these things, since all that we ever perceive directly are 'transitory particulars'."

<sup>1</sup> Though there is a good deal of discussion of the point in *Scientific Thought* especially Chapters X and XIII.

In the same context there is another example of this kind of transition. In his *Scientific Thought* (p. 246) Broad was dealing with an objection (which, by the way, he called a "baseless prejudice") to the effect that "we are not aware of sensa and their properties, as a rule, unless we specially look for them" [e.g. that when we are looking at a penny, we don't notice that our sensum is elliptical]. He had two replies to this, one, a special reply, to the effect that it is only when our sensum is very nearly circular that we may not notice that it is elliptical. The other was a more general reply, to the effect that the objection rests on a misunderstanding of the view about perception which the sensum theory holds.

Mr. Lean refers to the passage, so far as Broad's special reply is concerned, on p. 183; but by p. 189 he tells us that Broad "is obliged, as we have seen, to come to terms with the fact that we do not 'as a rule'—in truth, in the vast majority of cases—perceive such discrepancies" [i.e. between the sensum and the character we attribute to the object]—thus attributing to Broad just the point ('as a rule') Broad was concerned to deny, and also (190) giving the point an importance for Broad's theory which Broad explicitly refused to it.

I decided that I couldn't trust Mr. Lean in these matters of interpretation. And even on the assumption that what Mr. Lean was really trying to do was to show that on his premisses Broad ought logically to be in the position Mr. Lean was attributing to him, I didn't think the attempt was successful. In consequence I thought Mr. Lean's critical attacks were directed against the wrong target.

Mr. Lean's own account of perception is given only bit by bit in the course of his discussion, and I may have misunderstood him. It rests on the theory that our common sense modes of expression refer only to observable situations, and cannot mean more than is sensibly revealed in such situations (19). He takes as example the experience "I see a tree," which he says is "intended to convey only the kind of commonplace observable situation in terms of which we were taught its use or meaning" (19-20). It could not possibly refer to anything not observable (22). Similarly, if we speak in ordinary language of an object remaining the same over a long period, this must be interpreted "in the ordinary sense; and this is the sense in which even a philosopher could identify his hat in the cloakroom and would lodge a complaint with the management if it were not there when he returned, or if it had been exchanged for another" (26-27).

The question is, how much Mr. Lean is saying. He defends the view that objects are themselves coloured, and that they have the colour they have, regardless of whether or not we happen to be looking at them, on the grounds that whenever we look at (say) a red object, we see it red, and that colour photographs taken of objects when no one is looking at them show just the colours we see when we do look at the objects. And he adds: "Obviously in all such cases there is some persistent physical characteristic in the object itself which is responsible for its consistently giving rise to the same colour experience. It is this *permanent disposition* which we have in mind when we say that colour is a physical property of objects themselves, and not *merely* a quality of sensations" (127). Now unless he can show that this permanent disposition is literally colour, this argument does not do what he must do if he is to justify his assertion that things are coloured when no one is looking at them.

He says (181) that scientists "cannot correctly say that physical objects are never red or hot—if these words are to be understood in their literal ordinary senses. . . . It would be very strange indeed if merely by giving a casual analysis of the process by which we perceive the sensible qualitative characteristics of objects, the scientist could cause the characteristics to disappear!"

But this does not give what he needs either. There is a characteristic gesture on p. 61, where he says, "We believe (*know!*) that physical objects are coloured . . . regardless of whether or not we happen to be looking at them"; and I think his ultimate justification is to be found in his repeated statement that our perceptual knowledge is empirical, and that the language in which we express it cannot be wrong in principle. The expressions we use "mean nothing more nor less than the kind of experienceable situations to which they were devised to refer" (35). How else, he asks, could one determine what characteristics a penny actually had save by careful inspection? "What other meaning can be given to the words: 'the characteristics which the penny actually has'?" (134).

Now if "the book is still red when no one is looking at it" were taken in a non-literal sense to mean nothing more than that the book appears red whenever someone is looking at it, that colour photographs of it taken in the absence of observers appear red when someone looks at them, and so on, then Mr. Lean could maintain his account of meaning and still speak of objects keeping their sensory qualities when unobserved.

But if you want to go further than this and say that objects when "observable but not observed" have in a literal sense the qualities that they have when observed, I do not see that you can justify this on the ground that the correct usage of such an expression is determined within the context of social communication. For it doesn't, when taken literally, refer to anything experienceable. You can't observe anything when it is not being observed.

It seems to me that Mr. Lean actually asserts both things; and that the "literal" sense is contrary to his theory of language.

In so far as he says anything precise, Mr. Lean's account of what is "experienceable" does not differ from Broad's. He counters Broad's description of an act of sensing by saying that when, e.g., he sees a chair, he can't distinguish any such thing as that described by Broad as a visual sensum. He agrees "to be sure" that "when I see a chair of that colour and shape, it is true that I am seeing a brown patch of colour of such and such a shape, etc. But I cannot agree that the sense in which I see this is a different sense from that in which I see the chair (or at least the immediately visible part of the chair)" (53). The parenthesis here seems to give his whole case away. According to it the sense in which I am seeing a brown patch is no different from the sense in which I see the immediately visible part of the chair. Broad could not wish for more: except an account from Mr. Lean, in terms of visual experience, of the difference made by adding "of the chair."

What is curious to me is that Mr. Lean thinks Broad is depriving us of the chair, while he himself is giving us it. My own impression is that if either of them falls short, it is Mr. Lean, with his theory of language holding us to what is completely observable, rather than Broad, who does take seriously the question what justification, if any, can be given for statements, taken literally, characterizing physical objects when they are not actually being observed.

L. J. RUSSELL.

*Truth and Freedom.* By LOUIS DE RAEYMAEKER and other Professors of the University of Louvain. (Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, Editions E. Nauwelaerts, Louvain and Basil Blackwell, Oxford. Pp. vii + 133. Price 25s.)

The best way of indicating the nature of this book will be to quote from the front cover. It "was written at the invitation of the present President of the United States of America, Dwight D. Eisenhower. In 1947, in his capacity as President of Columbia University, he requested the University of Louvain, as

well as others throughout the world, to take part in the bicentennial of Columbia's founding by explaining "the ideal of full freedom of scholarly enquiry and expression, the right of mankind to knowledge and to the free use thereof." In answer to his invitation, seven eminent professors of one of Europe's most renowned universities consider the freedom of scientific research and expression and its relationship to truth, first in general according to the tradition of their venerable University, and then in particular from the viewpoints of philosophy, psychology, history, sociology, physical science and literature."

Louvain is, of course, a Catholic university. It is, therefore, natural that the main question discussed, directly or indirectly, in all these essays is whether the Catholic scholar is placed under any sort of restricting condition in his specialist studies by the nature of his religious beliefs. The answer in every case is that he is not. The arguments put forward in the various essays are all very much the same and run something like this. Truth is (*a*) invisible, but (*b*) to be found on a variety of levels, which cannot conflict with each other for the simple reason that the levels are different. The Catholic thus has a double assurance that no true discovery can ever conflict with his faith. If, as sometimes happens, the levels get run together and there appears to be a conflict, then either the apparently scientific truth cannot be so solid after all or, perhaps, the theological doctrines have not yet been interpreted as they should be. Which it is, only time can tell. Certainly, the scientist, or historian, must be very careful as to the public use he makes of any result that may seem to be at variance with religion as at present understood. But this is by no means to say that he, as scientist, should not freely continue with his work in whatever way is considered to be scientifically best. And if any Catholics have ever said otherwise, they have shown themselves more zealous than wise. (One partial exception might have to be made were a reigning Pope to make any pronouncement at variance with this view; but, Professor Aubert seems to imply in his essay on "The Freedom of the Catholic Historian," the exception need last no longer than the reign of such a Pope (p. 84).)

One may or may not disagree with this general position and with the doctrine of different levels in particular, but it would be hard to quarrel with sentiments so reasonable as these. On the other hand, their enunciation, while undeniably fitting for occasions such as bicentennial celebrations, does not easily make for essays of remark or interest. One feels that the only appropriate reaction is to welcome the prevailing attitude and to refrain from disputing the details. To this there is, however, one notable exception, the essay on "Truth and Freedom. A Philosophical Study," by Professor Dondyne. Professor Dondyne is concerned to develop two main themes. One is that already outlined above and common to all the writers, though expressed by him with particular clarity and force. ("If the case of Galileo ended with the victory of the new science, it was also of enormous benefit for Faith and theology, for it obliged theologians to rethink their synthesis, and in the process Faith gained much in purity and grandeur" (p. 46).) The other is that truth and freedom are complementary values which depend intimately on each other. One side of his argument may be sketched as follows without, I hope, too great a distortion.

The term "freedom" has two aspects, the negative one of absence of restraint and the "positive element of a certain ideal of autonomy, self-control or self-possession in the exercise of one's activity." While both aspects go together, the second is of particular importance in "moral and religious life." Thus, to act freely is to know what one is doing and why; (the question

is left open as to how one should here analyse the word "know," but there seems no reason why a dispositional analysis should not do). It is to give a meaning to one's life. "But our actions acquire a meaning to the extent that they embody values . . . therefore it may be said that free-will behaviour ultimately is a deliberate and efficacious value-judgment embodied in a concrete action. Deliberation or motivation, decision and execution . . . are not so much distinct events . . . as constituent aspects of one and the same action in the process of maturation. . . . To judge that a value is worth while is to place oneself at the service of this value . . . by that very fact to give a meaning to one's life and take charge of it" (p. 32). At the same time, the term "reason" has "in the main two fundamental meanings." The first is the rationalistic or deductive sense; the second what Professor Dondeyne calls the existential sense, according to which "reason means that general exigency existing in us, taken together with its corresponding power, to give a foundation to, and a justification for, our affirmations and behaviour. It is this exigency which . . . is the basis of our freedom and personality" (p. 47). Thus, the notion of free action is bound up with that of reason and knowledge of the truth, by virtue of the relationships which both notions have with that of a value-judgment.

Of course, this sketch does not adequately represent the whole argument, which itself, naturally enough, is stated rather than worked out. Of course, too, the philosophical tradition in which the essay is written is very different from that which is dominant in England today. But it is not for that reason any the less stimulating, whether or not one believes that the only or prime function of philosophy is the investigation of actual and possible conceptual relationships. Indeed, it may well be from this standpoint that many of Professor Dondeyne's remarks will be found to be most suggestive.

If the word "suggestive" implies a promise, however, it also implies a limit. Suggestions need time and space for further exploration and neither are unrestricted here. It remains, therefore, to be recorded that while the book is excellently, even extravagantly, produced, the standards of proof-reading and translation (from the French) are extremely uneven. The mistakes include some borderline cases where one is uncertain to which of the possible failures they should be attributed. The following seems the most interesting example (p. 114): "As much as Sartre excels in the description of the sensible universe, so much he is utterly without feelers for the spiritual world." The levels of experience are indeed open to confusion in unexpected ways.

ALAN MONTEFIORE.

*Condorcet. Sketch for an historical picture of the progress of the human mind.*

Translated by June Barraclough, with an introduction by Stuart Hampshire. (Weidenfeld and Nicholson. 1955. Pp. xvi + 202. 12s. 6d.)

There are two points that must be recorded straightforwardly. First, this is, all in all, a very good translation, accurate but free; (though something seems to have gone wrong with the opening sentence of Stage Six). Second, Hampshire's two-part introduction, first to the author and then to the work, is as admirable as it is brief.

This text is the third published in the series "The Library of Ideas", the aim of which, according to the back cover, "is to present to a public, which includes the general reader and the university student, a number of significant

works in the history of Western thought and ideas that, for all their importance, are not at present easily obtainable." It is, no doubt, an excellent and useful thing that such works should be made available; although for whom exactly it may be excellent and in just what ways it may be useful is clearly a question open to considerable discussion. (See, for example, Wilfrid Harrison on "Texts in Political Theory" in a recent issue of *Political Studies*.) It may also be taken for granted fairly enough that there are a variety of good academic reasons why the student, *qua* student, should be grateful for the appearance in translation of this particular work. But what about the "general reader"? What might one reply to him if he should ask whether it is still worth his while to read this last hurried work of Condorcet?

It dates, of course, of that there is no doubt; it dates, one may say, in three main ways. The one I should put first is the naïveté of so much of the history which plays after all a very large part in the whole. It is true, as Hampshire points out, that in a sense Condorcet's view of what history should be was strikingly modern in its breadth and that he was among the very first to realize how all social phenomena are fundamentally interrelated. It is also true that it would be ridiculous to criticize a sketch for being too thin. Nevertheless, if it is history that the general reader wishes to read—as opposed to the materials of history—there are other and more modern places to go. Secondly, and paradoxically, it dates in some of its most brilliant anticipations of the future, but in precisely the fact that for Condorcet they *are* anticipations rather than statements of what would now be generally accepted. Thirdly, and notoriously, there is his eighteenth century optimism. As Professor Toynbee has said, "An equally generous minded and sanguine observer of human affairs who was writing an equivalent of Condorcet's *Sketch* in 1955 would probably estimate both Man's goodness and Man's rationality a good deal lower than Condorcet's estimate in 1793–94." But this is a point that it is perhaps too easy to overstress and that is why I put it third. For one thing, doubt will keep on breaking in. Condorcet recognizes perfectly well that progress in the past has been anything but uninterrupted either in its march or its spread and there may yet be many zigzags in store; nor does he suppose that all men are without exception and inevitably made morally better by the acquisition of further knowledge. It is even possible to overemphasize his belief in the intrinsic rationality of man—in spite of his touching conviction that the possibility of mass communication cannot bring but mass enlightenment—for he is well aware, too, of the great powers of prejudice. Of course, he was fundamentally an optimist and a rationalist; and of course this is a faith that is far more difficult today. Even so, it may have its modern versions. There is, for example, a Marxist one that seems to be widely held, differing in many ways from that of Condorcet, but still of the same family; and there are certainly others.

But the very fact that it is so firmly dated is one of the reasons why the *Sketch* has still much to offer. Views which, however, important, are today becoming inescapably platitudinous, whether they be on the benefits of social insurance or on the joint role of mathematics and experiment in the natural sciences, recover a fresh impact in the writings of an eighteenth-century thinker. Not, of course, that the fact of their having been delivered so long ago is sufficient to account for this impact. The work of an original and vigorous mind remains vigorous and original long after its originality has become everybody else's commonplace. If Condorcet is often by modern standards naïve, he is equally often pungent and shrewd. But this is not all, not even perhaps the most important. One needs to know something of the circumstances under which it was written—the constant danger of discovery

and death at the hands of the revolution for which its author had worked so hopefully and hard—to appreciate the full nobility of this work. If it is right, as surely it is, to say that Condorcet's optimism and rationalism were for him a faith, it must not be thought that it was one uncontested by bitter and ungrateful personal experience. To it the *Sketch* is an impressive memorial.

ALAN MONTEFIORE.

*God and Polarity. A Synthesis of Philosophies.* By WILMOM HENRY SHELDON,  
(Yale University Press. Pp. 712. Price \$8.00. English price 63s.)

A vast amount of scholarly labour has gone to the production of this very elaborate and handsomely printed volume. The reader who perseveres will find in it many points of interest and information not easily available elsewhere. But it must also be said at once that the enterprise as a whole does not seem to be successful or very well conceived. The author is much concerned about the agelong disagreements of philosophers, and as our situation today is "critical as never before in recorded history," he thinks it time to issue "a trumpet call to philosophy to mend its ways"; it "must integrate itself or die," and by this we are to understand apparently that philosophers must give up their besetting sin of trying to refute one another and of being more concerned with such refutations than with the attainment of truth. We must abandon the parochialism of supposing that we are right and others wrong; and this is again to be understood, not in the sense that we must cultivate modesty and tolerance, realizing that we *may* be wrong and others right, but in the much more startling sense that we must make no claim to truth which is exclusive of other claims. It is the exclusiveness of philosophical views that is most to be deplored; for we have only to "dig beneath the surface" to realize that they are all equally sound. Oriental practices have much to teach us here. "The Westerner loves to refute, he is an individualist, a free enterpriser competing with others even while he is a member of a philosopher's group. Not so in the East. There the note of a balance not to be upset, of a final truth that needs no progress, is pervasive" (p. 180). In pursuance of his aim to rid philosophy of its disputatiousness, Professor Sheldon undertakes an extensive survey of main types of philosophy, idealism, materialism, scholasticism and so forth, attempting to show that they have all stressed some important truth but have lapsed from grace by taking this as an exclusive principle by which to understand the world. The truths of various philosophies are complementary aspects of a polarity that extends throughout the whole universe, from the relation of right hand and left hand to the relation of man and God. If we ask how this is to be established without refuting the more restricted theories that compete with it, the answer is that it is established, not by logical proof (although that, like everything else, has its place) but by experiment, and it is by "experience" or "experiment" that Eastern thinkers in the main have attained the harmony which they can bequeath to the West. The main feature of the "experiment" is to set ourselves to improve conditions in the world and to ask whether or not there is a consensus of opinion among those thinkers who have been inspired by the same ideal about the finality of the sort of omnibus philosophy, rooted in the belief in the supremacy of value, which the author recommends himself. There are circumstances where "the majority vote" does not count for much, but it must count, and apparently be decisive, when "the majority is made up of men of high intelligence, seeking earnestly the good of their fellows" (p. 354).

Since these are the terms in which the author conceives his task, it is not likely that there will be found anywhere very precise arguments which will be of interest to philosophers. The surveys of various philosophies, especially oriental systems, have worth, and one cannot but be impressed by the industry which has enabled the author to describe the positions of some other philosophers almost entirely by weaving together quotations from their work for the length of many pages (not perhaps the best way of expounding them). There is also much good sense in the rejections (refutations?) of facile solutions of the problem of evil, notwithstanding the suggestion, which not many of Professor Sheldon's readers will take very seriously I hope, that the innocent bird engulfed by a snake may for all we can prove to the contrary, be expiating sins committed in a previous existence. As the author has, in my opinion, something worth while to bring forth from his obviously vast knowledge of Eastern thought for the enrichment of Western philosophy, especially where religious matters are concerned, it seems a very grave pity that he should have made himself in fact so ineffective, in the substance of his book, by the suicidal policy (for a philosopher) of disdaining argument on principle. In the circumstances little is left to the reviewer but the expression of the profoundest regret and the hope that misunderstandings of the nature of philosophy will not induce others to take so gloomy a view of the disagreements of those who practise it.

H. D. LEWIS.

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JOHN LOCKE: *Essays on the Law of Nature*. Latin Text, with translation, Introduction and notes, together with transcripts of Locke's shorthand in his Journal for 1676. Edited by W. VON LEYDEN. (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1954, 35s. net.)

In this volume the editor has made available three early writings of Locke from manuscripts in the Lovelace Collection now in the Bodleian Library: firstly, a series of essays in Latin on the law of nature; secondly, a half-humorous speech closely related to these essays, and composed by Locke for the ceremony at which he resigned the office of Censor at Christ Church in 1664; and thirdly some transcripts of shorthand entries from Locke's journal in the year 1676.

As regards the content of the essays, the existence of a natural law is briefly demonstrated, and two principal questions are then considered in turn: by what faculties do men come to know this law? and why and to what extent is it binding upon them? The answer suggested to the former question is that the senses, aided by the understanding, should suffice to inform men of the law of nature, but that many of them fail to make a right employment of their faculties. It is clear from Locke's correspondence that his thoughts had been directed to this subject about the time of the Restoration; and the essays may represent lectures given by him at Christ Church during his tenure of the office of Censor. Mr. von Leyden has printed from two MSS. the Latin text of the essays, with an English translation and a summary of contents; and in his extensive Introduction he has dealt with all the principal questions which a reader or researcher is likely to ask. He begins by furnishing some general information about the papers in the Lovelace Collection; he considers the sources of Locke's view of natural law, and the channels by which ancient or mediaeval ideas reached him; he asks why Locke failed to publish the Essays in spite of requests from some of his friends; and he points out that the discussion of natural law is constantly in the background in the later writings, the *Essay on*

*the Human Understanding* and the *Second Treatise on Civil Government*. Further, some criticism of Locke's view of natural law is offered from the point of view of contemporary logic.

The success of the editor in dealing with his complicated task, and in bringing the most significant results clearly to the front, compensates to some extent for the second-rate quality of the essays themselves, and for their fumbling Latin style. Two points which emerge from the Introduction seem to me to be of special interest. Firstly, a development is traced, not merely in these essays but in Locke's writings as a whole, from a purely voluntaristic conception of the natural law, whereby it is viewed as a commandment of the divine lawgiver, towards a view of the rationalist or Platonic type. Locke becomes more sensitive to the need to show that the law is inherently rational, though, inasmuch as it is the divine will which makes it formally obligatory, a voluntaristic element remains. Locke is found to have been much influenced by Nathanael Culverwel, *An Elegant and Learned Discourse of the Light of Nature* (1652). Secondly, Locke could neither abandon, nor develop with any precision, the view which he had formed that a demonstrative science of morals is possible. His intention was, presumably, to show that the law of nature provides the foundation of such reasoning. But his study of the formation of moral ideas led him along a different path. In a paper on *Ethic in General* he is found declaring that "good and bad, being relative terms, do not denote anything in the nature of the thing, but only the relation it bears to another, in its aptness and tendency to produce in it pleasure or pain." There resulted much vacillation in his thought, and a void space in the *Essay* was the consequence. This is well described in a passage too long to quote here (Introduction pp. 77-78).

Though Mr. von Leyden's adjective "hedonistic" appears to me too strong to describe the factor in Locke's later ethics which comes to light here, it is plainly present, and further evidence of it might perhaps have been found in the *Thoughts on Education*; parents, in early life, are in the position of law-givers, and they are urged to direct children by their smiles or by their angry and frowning countenance.

The reviewer can perhaps best justify his existence by calling attention to some mistakes in his translation, such are not surprising in a first edition.

P. 110 par. 2: the reading *praestare* is supported by p. 116 line 5 and p. 282, last sentence of Note A, P. 116-7: the word *unquam* has obviously dropped out before *latum*, or *unquam* may be a mistake for *unguem*. For "nothing, no matter how great," read "nothing deviates even by an inch." P. 126-7: As on p. 125, Locke's *fando enim audimus* must be intended to represent the English "hearsay." The meaning is surely: "I come next to tradition, which I distinguish from sense not because traditions do not enter the mind by sense—for it is through hearsay that they are received—but because the ears hear the sound only, and it is belief which embraces the fact." P. 51, line 8: By *conceptus animi uti et corporis* I think he means not "every concept about the mind as well as about the body" but "conception in the mental, no less than in the physical sense." P. 153 line 18: the apodosis begins at *qui se produceret*. P. 165 line 4 foll.: Here and in the corresponding passage in the summary, p. 100, the word "concerning" is not required and leads to distortion of the argument. Locke is distinguishing three kinds of *consensus naturalis*: agreement in customs or actions, agreement in opinions, and agreement in basic general principles. To speak of agreement concerning opinions and morals suggests that he means all three kinds of agreement to be reflective. Further, whereas the Latin text on p. 164 line 6 is *alii-alii*, what is translated is *aliis-aliis*. The translation required is this: "Secondly, in those opinions to which men give assent in varying degrees, some firmly and constantly, others feebly and unsteadily. Thirdly,

agreement in first principles, which are of such a character as to elicit ready assent from any man of sound mind, etc." P. 177 2nd par. line 14: Here "consent concerning some opinion" should be emended for the reason just given; and on the rest of this page the translation seems to misrepresent the argument, the view stated in the footnote being mistaken. The question under review is whether universal consensus of opinion, even if known to be a fact, could prove that the practice agreed upon was a natural law. Locke argues that it could still be no more than an indication of such a law. "For I can never know for certain whether *this* [i.e. any given opinion] is the opinion of every individual. That would be a matter of belief, not of knowledge. For (1) if I discover this opinion in my own mind before ascertaining the fact of such consensus, then the knowledge of the consensus will not prove to me what I knew already from natural principles; and (2) if I cannot be sure that it really is the opinion of my own mind until I have first ascertained that there is such a consensus among men, then I can also reasonably doubt whether it is the opinion of others; since it is impossible to suggest a reason why something should be accorded by nature to all other men which I feel to be wanting in myself."

P. 193 line 6: for "anywhere" read "in some places" (*alicubi*). P. 197: *aut omnino laeta non sit, aut iterum abrogata*. For *laeta* read *lata* or *data*, and translate: "either the law has never been given . . . or it has been repealed." P. 241: *sine aliqua malignitatis suspicione* is, I think, a reference to the evil eye. Same page: for *sic volentibus satis*, which is nonsense, read *sic volentibus fatis*. P. 242 line 3: Surely the reference to the executioner's axe is superfluous? Locke, looking forward to the demise which will release him from his troubles, says that he has acted (as Censor) according to the laws of nature and the statutes of Christ Church, but that he now approaches the altar as a willing victim and offers to the knife a throat which has been saved from so many perils: "for I hope that my offences have not been grave enough to deserve the halter," etc.

The Latin style of Locke, in the valedictory speech, reeks of Seneca. This surely might be borne in mind when considering the sources of his views on natural law, and more especially the target at which he is aiming in his criticism of innate ideas? Here he might have read: (*Epist. 117*) *multum dare solemus praesumptioni omnium hominum et apud nos veritatis argumentum est aliquid omnibus videri: tanquam deos esse inter alia hoc colligimus, quod omnibus insita de dis opinio est, nec ulla gens usquam est adeo extra leges moresque proiecta, ut non aliquos deos credat.*

D. J. ALLAN.

*Philosophy and Analysis.* A selection of articles published in *Analysis* between 1933-40 and 1947-53. Edited, with an introduction, by Margaret Macdonald. (Basil Blackwell. 1955. Pp. 296. Price 30s.)

A sixth anthology of analytic and linguistic philosophy! After Professor Flew's two series of "Logic and Language"; after the two bulkier "anthologies" that have appeared in America; and after Mr. Elton's more recent slighter volume, comes yet a sixth. The general reader of philosophy may feel hesitant; should his natural desire to keep abreast of the times induce him to embark upon this latest volume? This doubt is likely to be sharpened when he realizes that all (save one) of the articles reproduced in this volume appeared originally in *Analysis*, a small philosophical journal whose get-up has always been attractive but whose contents—many of them in pre-war years contributed by exiled Continental philosophers of ultra-empiricist or

ultra-formalist leanings—have usually been rather technical and not the easier for being brief. No, the general reader of philosophy may conclude, this volume is not for him. And undoubtedly it has been designed primarily for university students of philosophy, undergraduate and postgraduate, who can find in it important articles which are otherwise virtually unobtainable. Nevertheless, it contains more for the general reader of philosophy than might at first appear; and it is with his interests in mind that I suggest that Miss Macdonald's book may prove instructive, not just as a source book, but as a kind of composite picture of "what has happened to British philosophy" during the last twenty years.

A great deal has happened to it in the period. Some of us may have been baffled by this development, but no one, I think, who has given the matter careful consideration, can deny that there have been real gains: gains in respect of instruments and methods, gains in respect of standards of care and exactness, gains in force and range of expression, and gains in respect of the atmosphere—"scientific" in the best sense of that word—in which philosophical discussion is generally conducted today.

Now it seems to me that *Analysis* has epitomized the movement to which these gains are due better than any other journal of its period; and Miss Macdonald's volume, by giving us a sample of the best work that *Analysis* has published, helps us to see what that movement has been and is. Even to the relative outsider the phenomenon is of the greatest interest; and if only as a "documentary" of its period, Miss Macdonald's book deserves the attention of every serious student of philosophy.

In her excellent introduction Miss Macdonald recalls the original aim with which *Analysis* was launched, viz., to publish short articles on relatively isolable philosophical problems, to the solution of which different philosophers might successively contribute from their different viewpoints. She wisely refrains from attempting an exact account of the "analyticity" of her authors, but she writes illuminatingly on two of the main influences upon the analytic movement, viz., Earl Russell and Ludwig Wittgenstein. By contrast, what she writes of Professor Moore's influence—which she rightly regards as the most important of the three and as still growing—falls short. (The difficulty which admirers and disciples of Moore find in explaining their debt to him seems to me one of the enigmas of contemporary philosophy.) Possibly the most profitable way of reading the articles which she has collected is to distinguish in them the five or six main ways in which Moore's writings and teachings have profoundly affected contemporary analysts.

Miss Macdonald has grouped her material into ten chapters, the most successful of which well illustrate the kind of progressive attack upon some chosen problem which has been the most notable feature of *Analysis*. Chapters VI, VII and X will probably be the most interesting to general readers of philosophy. In the first of these Professors Toulmin and Flew apply Professor Ryle's well-known interpretation of statements about motives to Freud's clinical descriptions on the one hand and his general theorizings about mental action on the other. Both philosophers show insight into Freud's thought; but both unfortunately accept Professor Ryle's analysis quite uncritically, despite the exceptions and objections which have been raised to it—almost as though it were an "established philosophical truth." Nevertheless, there is enough of value in Ryle's interpretation to make their enterprise worthwhile; and it is good to hear (from Miss Macdonald) that experts in the psychological field have found their discussions useful. Mr. Peters's rejoinder in defence of Freud's "mechanistic" theories of mental action is a rather less forceful performance. Chapter VII entitled "Events, Time and Tense," con-

sists in three attempts by different authors to answer a problem that is very clearly posed by Professor Duncan-Jones, viz., if references to the *past* are in all cases references to something that happened before *now*, must such sentences as "Brutus killed Caesar in B.C. 44" mean something different on each occasion that they are asserted? The discussion is clear, workmanlike and even exciting. But it is curious that none of the contributors considers the possibility that the concern which some historians have shown about their own activity of dating events and about the kind of evidence this activity requires, might throw some light on the problem. In Chapter X Mr. Paul and Miss Macdonald give excellent examples of analytical methods derived from Wittgenstein and Moore applied to two important Marxist doctrines, Lenin's Theory of Perception and Engels' assertion that the world can only be understood as a system not of *things* but of *processes*. Both authors sweep the Marxists' floor in dual metaphorical sense, clearly, methodically, yet devastatingly. Yet there is something tell-tale in the way in which Miss Macdonald lets slip the epithet "boring" to express her reaction to any metaphysical enterprise of the kind upon which Engels (admittedly here, as always, a thoroughly second-rate thinker) was engaged.

Miss Macdonald's grouping of topics in other chapters is somewhat more artificial and I will, therefore, simply single out what seem to me the most valuable of the remaining articles: Two masterly exorcisings of Russell's "heterologicality" paradox by Mr. Nathaniel Lawrence and Professor Ryle; two remarkably pungent and capable articles on "Likeness of Meaning" by Professor Nelson Goodman; a very convincing short article "Two Senses of Probability" by Mr. Urmson, and a careful rejoinder by Mr. Whately; Professor Max Black's blessed elucidation of that piece of elephantine logical sophistication, Tarski's "Semantic Theory of Truth," and an important development of F. P. Ramsey's "No-theory of Truth" by Mr. P. F. Strawson. One of the most interesting themes that recurs in a number of chapters is that of the relation of a sentence's social and practical *context* to its *content*: on this subject Mr. A. M. McIver supplied, in articles dated 1936 and 1938, a number of ideas which recent discussions have shown to be very fruitful.

I have noticed only two small misprints which could usefully be removed in any later edition. On page 2, footnote 7, a number needs to be supplied to complete the last sentence. On page 180, at the end of paragraph 1, the index "1" needs to be removed.

W. B. GALLIE.

*A Dictionary of Linguistics.* By M. A. PEI and F. GAYNOR. (Philosophical Library, New York, 1954. Pp. viii + 238. Price \$6.00.)

This little dictionary gives concise definitions of terms used in the two branches of Linguistics, that is in *General* (or *Descriptive*) *Linguistics* (which deals with the Nature of Language and with ways of describing Language and languages) and in *Historical* (or *Comparative*) *Philology* (which deals with the histories of individual languages and language-families). Much of the vocabulary of Linguistics is esoteric and this book will primarily be of use—and of very real use—to non-philologists and elementary students of Linguistics (also, for reference, to many other classes of persons). Recently, devotees of Structural Linguistics—that doctrine which has, in America, achieved a dominance comparable to that of late held by Marrian due to Linguistics in Russia—have introduced a welter of new terms into the American literature of the subject, terms not generally used outside it, and this dictionary naturally abounds in these (cf., for instance, "*significian*: A student or prac-

titioner of significs (q.v.)" (p. 197), and "progressive tense: A verbal form, usually periphrastic, expressing that the action is, was or will be in progress at the time indicated" (p. 176)—thus, no doubt, a concept somewhat similar to that more usually indicated by means of the words *imperfective* or *durative*). The Dictionary does contain a large number of entries but it is by no means complete. Two serious omissions seemed to me to be  $\ddot{\alpha}\pi.\lambda\gamma.$  =  $\ddot{\alpha}\pi\alpha\zeta$   $\lambda\gamma\mu\epsilon\nu\sigma\omega\tau$  and *Stufenwechsel*, perhaps the commonest technical term of Finno-Ugrian Philology—the latter omission is rather surprising for, in the Dictionary, care has been taken to suggest standard names for the Finno-Ugrian languages (as is necessary, for they are but little written about in English)—not, alas, the names suggested as standard by the present reviewer, *Leeds Studies in English and Kindred Languages*, Vol. III (1934) pp. 57-9, and *Transactions of the Philological Society*, 1941, p. 1 (thus cf. *Olonetziian*, p. 154 instead of his suggested *Aunus* which still seems to him in every way superior).

ALAN S. C. ROSS,

*Studies in Zen.* By D. T. SUZUKI, D.Litt. (Rider; 1955. 12s. 6d.)

*Studies in Zen* is a collection of seven originally separate articles, the first of which was written in 1906, and the last in 1953; there is, inevitably, a certain degree of repetition, but, on the whole, the essays combine to give a fairly broad picture of Professor Suzuki's interpretations of Zen.

The book begins with a history of the school of Zen—sectarian history being a subject very near to the heart of the majority of Japanese Buddhist scholars. But we soon pass beyond this aspect of the approach, and do not return to it. Zen was admirably suited to the Chinese temperament, and to the existing, and potential rival, systems of thought. It had its breath of Taoism, and it appealed to the love of formalism and ritual on which Confucius had built: it was, in fact, so elastic, as to be adaptable to almost any environment. The stress on intuition, and the neglect of the intellect was and is ideally fitted to the thinking processes of both Chinese and Japanese: it is by no means rare to find what seems to be an intuitive feel for what one suspects is the correct answer to some problem, followed by (to satisfy the demands of western reasoning) a series of logical proofs which lead to anywhere but the same answer.

Zen is "a special transmission outside the scriptures, not depending on the letter, but pointing directly to the Mind." Zen masters have not demanded of their pupils extensive studies of the sutras, and Professor Suzuki maintains that the attainment of the desired end is by an act of will, plus intuition, which moves over an intellectual impasse. It is at this point that he begins to run into difficulties. The Zen experience is "beyond the ken of intellectual painting, or dialectical delineation," he admits,—yet these are his only means of explaining it to us. The paradox, or the mere repeat of the pupil's question in the reply of the master, which is part of the peculiar technique of the Zen master, must then remain unintelligible to one who has not experienced the enlightenment which comes of the act of intuition and will combined—and this Professor Suzuki cannot induce in his reader. The most that he can do is to aver, from the inside, that "when looked at from the inside, . . . there looms up the big character Zen, which is the key to all the mysteries." One feels some sympathy with Hu Shih, when he complains (in an article to which one of the seven essays is a somewhat unconvincing reply), that according to Suzuki Zen is illogical, irrational and therefore beyond our intellectual under-

standing. The best he can do is to tell the world that Zen is Zen and altogether beyond our logical comprehension.

The editing of the essays has been undertaken by Mr. Christmas Humphreys and the London Buddhist Society: as they extend over a period of almost fifty years, it must have posed many problems. The printing of both Chinese and Japanese versions of technical terms is useful; but there are many cases where a Chinese is referred to by the Japanese reading of his name. There is a constant misunderstanding of the function of the hyphen in a Chinese proper name—Dr. Hu Shih, for example, appears as Hu-Shih, the equivalent of Humphreys-Christmas. It might also have been possible to indicate the long vowel in Japanese—and most publishing houses seem equal to the task—by means of a bar placed above the relevant vowel; thus, mondō, or bushidō. The word katsu or kwatsu (p. 45) appears elsewhere as kwatz (p. 144), or Katz (p. 184), and neither of the latter instances is listed in the index. And if the reader is keen enough to consult the Index, he will be faced with contradictions the like of the following (which is not an isolated instance); p. 184—Tokusan (Teh-shan, 790–865), and Index—Tokusan (Te-shan) (779–865). This sample of errors I have treated at some length, for they will cause as much bewilderment to the novice, as they must do exasperation to the expert.

G. BOWNAS.

#### Books also received.

*Journal of the Society of Psychical Research*, September 1955. Pp. 53. 3s.  
 RALPH B. WINN (Ed.). *American Philosophy*. Philosophical Library, New York. 1955. Pp. (xviii) & 318. \$6.00.  
 A. A. ROBACK (Ed.). *Present-day Psychology*. Philosophical Library, New York. 1955. Pp. (xiv) & 995. \$12.00.  
 SURENDRANATH DASGUPTA. *A History of Indian Philosophy*. Cambridge University Press. 1955. Pp. (xiv) & 204. 25s.  
 JEAN BODIN, tr. and selected by M. J. TOOLEY. *Six Books of the Commonwealth*. Basil Blackwell. 1955. Pp. (xlvii) & 212. 15s.  
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 ANTONY FLEW and ALASDAIR MACINTYRE (Eds.). *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*. S.C.M. Press. 1955. Pp. (xii) & 274. 21s.  
 REGINALD O. KAPP. *Facts and Faith*. Riddell Memorial Lecture. Oxford University Press. 1955. Pp. 63. 5s.  
 DAVID HUME. *Writings on Economics*. Ed. Eugene Rotwein. Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd. 1955. Pp. (cxi) & 224. 30s.  
 CHARLES A. HART (Ed.). *Knowledge and Expression*. Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association. Twenty-Ninth Annual Meeting. The Catholic University of America. 1955. Pp. 313. \$3.50.  
 ETIENNE GILSON. *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*. Sheed & Ward. 1955. Pp. (xvii) & 829. 42s.  
 FERNAND VAN STEENBERGHEN. *The Philosophical Movement in the Thirteenth Century*. Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd. 1955. Pp. (ix) & 115. 15s.  
 FRANCOIS MAURIAC. *Words of Faith*, Tr. by E. H. Flannery. Philosophical Library, New York. 1955. Pp. 118. \$2.75.  
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JOHN BONFORTE. *The Philosophy of Epictetus*. Philosophical Library, New York. 1955. Pp. (xiv) & 146. \$3.00.

PHILIP BLAIR RICE. *On the Knowledge of Good and Evil*. Random House, New York. 1955. Pp. 300. \$4.50.

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JUSTUS BUCHLER. *Nature and Judgment*. Columbia University Press (London: Oxford University Press). 1955. Pp. (viii) & 210. 30s.

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SRI AUROBINDO. *On Yoga. Book I. The Synthesis of Yoga*. Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. 1955. Pp. (iv) & 1034. Rs. 15.

JASON LEWIS SAUNDERS. *Justus Lipsius, The Philosophy of Renaissance Stoicism*. The Liberal Arts Press, New York. 1955. Pp. (xviii) & 228. \$4.50.

RADHAKRISHNAN. *East and West*. George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1955. Pp. 140. Cloth 10s. 6d., Paper 6s.

L. E. J. BROUWER, E. W. BETH and A. HEYTING (Eds.). *Mathematical Interpretation of Formal Systems*. North-Holland Publishing Company, Amsterdam. 1955. Pp. (vii) & 113. No price given.

ANDERS WEDBERG. *Plato's Philosophy of Mathematics*. Almqvist & Wiksell, Sweden. 1955. Pp. 154. Swed. Cr. 19.

KARL MARX. *The Poverty of Philosophy* (New Edition). Lawrence & Wishart. 1956. Pp. 256. 3s.

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T. M. P. MAHADEVAN. *The Re-Discovery of Man*. Presidential Address to the Thirtieth Indian Philosophical Congress at Nagpur. December 1955. No other details given.

DAGOBERT D. RUNES. *On the Nature of Man*. Philosophical Library, New York. 1956. Pp. 105. \$3.00.

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# NEW BOOKS

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JULIAN MARIAS. *Reason and Life*. Hollis & Carter. 1956. Tr. by K. S. Reid and E. Sarmiento. Pp. (xiii) & 413. 35s.

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PAUL LORENZEN. *Einführung in die operative Logik und Mathematik*. Springer-Verlag, Berlin. 1955. Pp. (vii) & 298. DM. 42.

JOHANNES HESSEN. *Religions-Philosophie*. Band I. *Methoden und Gestalten der Religionsphilosophie*. Band II. *System der Religionsphilosophie*. Ernst Reinhardt in Basel. Pp. 306 & 338 respectively. Fr. 32.

MARIO M. ROSSI. *Saggio su Berkeley*. Gius. Laterza & Figli. 1955. Pp. 382. No price given.

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EMMANUEL RIVERSO. *La Teologia Esistenzialistica di Karl Barth*. Institute Editoriale del Mezzogiorno. 1955. Pp. 425. No price given.

RENE COMOTH. *Introduction à la Philosophie Politique de Benedetto Croce*. Centre d'Études Libérales de Liège. 1955. Pp. 77. No price given.

CARLO A. VIANO. *La Logica di Aristotele*. Taylor, Torino. 1955. Pp. 314. No price given.

## INSTITUTE NOTES

### RECEPTION TO LORD SAMUEL

The Reception in honour of the President's 85th birthday given by the Institute on November 22nd last at the Royal Society of Arts was a happy occasion. In a short speech Mr. Hooper outlined the history and aims of the Institute, Sir David Ross paid tribute to Lord Samuel in proposing his health and the President replied in a characteristic speech of charm and wit. The cake was cut, the toast drunk and Lord Samuel received the congratulations of friends and distinguished guests.

### "PHILOSOPHY AND THE LIFE OF THE NATION"

The text of Lord Samuel's speech given to an appreciative audience at The Assembly Hall, Institute of Education, on February 7th, will be published in the July number of the JOURNAL. Separate copies of the lecture will shortly be obtainable from the Institute, price 1/- post free.

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1956

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Tuesday, April 17th

Marion Milner, B.Sc.: "Psycho-Analysis and Art."  
Donald W. Winnicott, M.A., F.R.C.P.: "Psycho-Analysis and the Sense of Guilt."

Tuesday, April 24th  
Friday, April 27th

Roger Money-Kyrle, M.A., Ph.D.: "Psycho-Analysis and Philosophy."  
Elliott Jaques, M.D., Ph.D.: "Psycho-Analysis and Social Problems in Industry."

Tuesday, May 1st  
Tuesday, May 8th

John Bowlby, M.A., M.D.: "Psycho-Analysis and Child Care."  
Ilse Hellman, Ph.D.: "Psycho-Analysis and the Teacher."

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## CORRIGENDUM

In Professor D. D. Raphael's article, "Fallacies in and About Mill's *Utilitarianism*." (published in *PHILOSOPHY*, Vol. XXX, No. 115), the footnotes on pp. 351, 352, and 354 should refer to the Everyman edition of *Utilitarianism* and not to "John Stuart Mill."

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# PHILOSOPHY

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### THOMAS HOBBES'S DOCTRINE OF MEANING AND TRUTH

DOROTHEA KROOK

It is generally acknowledged that Hobbes's radical scepticism is intimately connected with his nominalism, and that his nominalism in turn rests upon the doctrine of meaning and truth set out in its best-known version in Chapters 4 and 5 of *Leviathan*.<sup>1</sup>

The connexion between Hobbes's scepticism and nominalism is indeed sufficiently attested by the pervasive influence of his nominalism upon his whole doctrine of commonwealth in *Leviathan*, of which the moral doctrine of 'just' and 'unjust,' the political doctrines of 'law' and 'covenant,' and the political-theology in Part III ('Of Christian Commonwealth') are the main constituent parts. The view that all law is positive law, which is the central doctrine of Hobbes's theory of commonwealth, rests upon the anterior view that all moral values—right and wrong, good and bad, just and unjust—are entirely artificial, entirely 'by institution.' ("Where there is no common power, there is no law: where no law, no injustice"); and that view of moral values depends directly upon his nominalistic doctrine of meaning and truth. Again, the view that the Scriptures are meaningless black marks on paper until they have been interpreted, which is the principle upon which the extraordinary reinterpretations of the Scriptures in Part III of *Leviathan* are conducted, derives by a similar logical necessity from his nominalistic doctrine of meaning and truth—that all meaning and truth are "constituted

<sup>1</sup> The references are to the following editions of the texts: (i) *Elements of Law* (E.L.), Tönnies' edition, Cambridge, 1928; (ii) *Leviathan* (L.), Michael Oakeshott's edition, Basil Blackwell, 1946; (iii) *Of Logic and Computation* (L.C.), Book I of *De Corpore*, Vol. I of Sir William Molesworth's 11-volume edition of Hobbes's *English Works*, 1839. All italics in passages quoted indicate my emphasis, except where it is stated that they are Hobbes's own.

arbitrarily by the inventors of speech.<sup>1</sup> And the very theory of the generation of Leviathan "by covenant of every man with every man," the view, that is, that the life of commonwealth can be created and maintained in no other way than by the voluntary incorporation of all men into that one great artificial man Leviathan—this, pre-eminently, presupposes a view of man's nature that reduces the human universe to a thoroughly nominalistic "universe of disconnected singulars."

In view of these evidences of the nominalistic character of Hobbes's moral, political and religious thought, it is perhaps worth attempting a fresh account of the doctrine of meaning and truth that is the philosophical foundation of his nominalism. My object in this paper is to show, first, that Hobbes's nominalistic doctrine of meaning and truth may be viewed as a function of his profoundly philosophical 'language-consciousness'—his consciousness, that is, of the crucial relation between 'language' and philosophy; then to show how this 'language-consciousness' enters into and affects both his theory of knowledge ('science' in the comprehensive seventeenth-century sense) and his theory of physics ('natural philosophy,' or 'science' in the narrower, modern sense); and, finally, to indicate how that language-consciousness is exhibited in two typical instances of Hobbes's nominalistic analysis of concepts, one political, the concept of 'sedition,' the other religious, the concept of 'God.'

## I. NOMINALISM AND LANGUAGE

### (i) Two types of language-theory

There is a vital distinction to be made between two types of language-theory to be found in Hobbes's writings. These are frequently confused, and when they are confused the full force and interest of Hobbes's philosophical preoccupation with language is likely to be missed.

The first of these language-theories treats 'language' as a system of *signs* (sounds in the air or marks on paper), functioning in the first instance as 'mnemonic marks' and afterwards as media of communication; and this theory has the character of a quasi-scientific psycho-physiological theory of language, a theory of 'sign-functioning.' The other treats 'language' as *discourse*, and affirms that meaning and truth are properties of 'language' in this sense ("Truth, and a true proposition is all one"); and this is Hobbes's strictly philosophical theory of language, his doctrine of meaning and truth. The first theory offers a psycho-physiological explanation of the sign-using behaviour of men, the human activity of 'signifying' by means of sounds in the air or marks on paper. As such, it is properly a part of Hobbes's

<sup>1</sup> L.C., 3.9.

materialist theory of knowledge: the activity of 'signifying' is explained as (in the first instance) one form, or modification, of matter-in-motion—a special case of 'adding' one patch of matter-in-motion, a sound in the air or mark on paper, to another patch of matter-in-motion, a sense-experience, either present or 'decaying.' (This in effect is Hobbes's definition of 'Understanding,'<sup>1</sup> which is at the same time his primary definition of 'signification.' The account of the functioning of signs as 'mnemonic marks' and for communication depends upon this primary definition of signification.) The other theory of 'language,' the doctrine of meaning and truth, is the logical foundation of Hobbes's nominalism. It views language-signs, not as psycho-physiological entities, but as discursive entities, as *meanings*; and is concerned, not to explain the functioning of language-signs as 'mnemonic marks' or for purposes of communication, but (a) to classify the varieties of names ('appellations') and the varieties of sentences ('propositions'), (b) to define 'true,' 'false,' 'error,' 'absurdity' as properties of language or discourse, and (c) to define knowledge or 'science' as a system of propositions, that is a system of 'language' or discourse.

It is true that in Hobbes's philosophy the second theory of language, the theory of language as discourse, presupposes the first theory, the psycho-physiological theory of sign-functioning. But the connection is not logically necessary—the Hobbesian doctrine of meaning and truth is compatible with other different theories of sign-functioning; and the psycho-physiological theory of sign-functioning as such neither presupposes nor entails the nominalistic doctrine of meaning and truth. For this reason the two theories ought to be kept rigidly apart in any discussion of Hobbes's 'language-consciousness.'

#### (ii) "Truth, and a true proposition, is all one"

Hobbes's nominalistic doctrine of the universal is well known. For Hobbes, universals are names, and nothing but names, and it is a great, and persistent, error (he insists repeatedly) to suppose that they are, in any sense, 'things.' "There [is] nothing in the world universal but names; for the things named are every one of them individual and singular."<sup>2</sup> But (the argument continues) true knowledge or 'science,' as distinct from mere 'experience' ('particulars'), is of universals; therefore, of names, or language. ". . . Experience concludeth nothing universally," he writes in *Elements of Law*,<sup>3</sup> "that is to say, we cannot from experience conclude, that any thing is to be called just or unjust, true or false, nor any proposition universal whatsoever, except it be from remembrance of the use of names imposed arbitrarily by men. . . ." It is through this link between his nominalistic

<sup>1</sup> L., Ch. 3.

<sup>2</sup> E.L., I. 4.II.

<sup>3</sup> L., I. 4 ("Names, proper and common").

definition of the universals as 'names,' and his definition of knowledge or 'science' as 'of universals,' that Hobbes's doctrine of meaning and truth emerges as a doctrine of 'language' or discourse.

Hobbes's definition of the crucial term 'proposition' (to begin with) is uncompromisingly linguistic. It is not defined as a 'judgment' or 'belief' concerning a (non-linguistic) fact, or state of affairs, but as a 'meaning': a proposition is

... a speech consisting of two names copulated, by which he that speaketh signifies he conceives that latter name to be the name of the same thing whereof the former is the name; or (which is all one) that the former name is comprehended by the latter.<sup>1</sup>

The definition of truth is so intimately connected with the definition of meaning ('proposition') that it is already present in the passage just quoted. (In the *Leviathan* version, indeed, they are not separated at all, but are run together into a single definition of 'true proposition'.<sup>2</sup>) And what emerges from this definition of truth is that, for Hobbes, all truth is 'analytic.' For what establishes the truth of a proposition is the purely 'syntactical' relation of 'entailment' or 'implication' between predicate and subject: if the predicate implies (entails, 'contains') the subject, the proposition is true, if it does not imply or entail the subject, the proposition is false:

In every proposition, be it affirmative or negative, the latter appellation either comprehendeth the former, as in this proposition, charity is a virtue, the name of virtue comprehendeth the name of charity (and many other virtues besides), and then is the proposition said to be *true* or *truth*: for, truth and a true proposition, is all one. Or else the latter appellation comprehendeth not the former; as in this proposition, every man is just, the name of just comprehendeth not every man; for *unjust* is the name of the far greater part of men. And then the proposition is said to be *false*, or *falsity*: falsity and a false proposition being the same thing.<sup>3</sup>

All truth, then, is 'analytic': that is to say, it is a property of 'language,' of propositions, statements, utterances, 'words'—always of linguistic entities, never of 'things,' or non-linguistic entities. "For true and false are attributes of speech, not of things. And where speech is not, there is neither truth nor falsehood...."<sup>4</sup> That is why (Hobbes argues) the man born deaf and dumb can never arrive at the universally true proposition "The three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles." He can by measuring—that is, by (sense)-'experience'—discover this to be a property of many particular triangles; but, being without the power of speech and therefore without the power of 'discourse of reason,' he is incapable of forming *general* ('universal') conceptions. And since the

<sup>1</sup> L.C., 3.2.

<sup>3</sup> E.L., I. 5.10. Hobbes's emphasis.

<sup>2</sup> L., I. 4 (p. 21).

<sup>4</sup> L., I. 4 (p. 21).

power to generalize is for Hobbes the power of 'speech' itself, the man who has the power of speech thereby has the power to recognize that the proposition "the three angles of a triangle," etc., is contained in the definition of triangle ("A triangle has three sides and three angles"), and is therefore entailed by that definition; and because it is entailed by it, that is, follows from it "by necessary connexion of terms," the proposition is universally true.<sup>1</sup>

(iii) 'Science,' what

From this doctrine of meaning and truth as properties of 'speech,' we pass directly to Hobbes's account of definition, and from this to his theory of knowledge or 'science,' by the following steps:

All truth is 'analytic': all true propositions are 'analytically' true: all definitions (being 'affirmations') are propositions: therefore they are 'analytically' true; that is, they are 'nominal.' Thus all definition is 'nominal' definition.

This account of definition follows from Hobbes's definitions of 'proposition' and 'truth,' which, in turn, follow from his nominalistic definition of 'universal.'

All true knowledge or 'science' (the argument continues) is demonstration. But to demonstrate is to draw out the consequences of definitions, a 'demonstration' being "a syllogism or series of syllogisms, derived and continued, from the definitions of names, to the last conclusion."<sup>2</sup> And definitions are always 'nominal,' that is, statements of the meanings of words; therefore, 'to demonstrate' is to draw out the full meaning of our 'primitive' propositions, or definitions. But this is to create a system of propositions, that is, a language-system, or system of discourse, composed of primitive propositions (the 'first' definitions, or 'axioms') and other propositions derived from them (the 'consequences' of those first definitions or axioms): in other words, a system of 'analytically' true-or-false propositions. 'Science,' then, which is 'demonstration,' is the creation of a language-system, or system of discourse, composed of propositions which are analytically meaningful and analytically true or false.

There be two sorts of knowledge, whereof the one is nothing else but sense, or knowledge original . . . and remembrance of the same; the other is called science or knowledge of the truth of propositions, and how things are called, and is derived from understanding. Both of these sorts are but experience; the former being the experience of the effects of things that work upon us from without; and the latter the experience men have of the proper use of names in language.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> L., I. 4 (p. 20).

<sup>2</sup> L.C., 6.16.

<sup>3</sup> E.L., I. 6.1.

(iv) '*Metaphysical nominalism*'

Now, this theory of knowledge by itself would constitute Hobbes a 'logical' (or 'epistemological') nominalist, but not yet a 'metaphysical' nominalist.<sup>1</sup> The metaphysical aspect of his nominalism discovers itself in his insistence upon the *arbitrariness* of the 'primitive propositions' that are the beginning of all demonstration and therefore of all science; and, consequently, since 'truth, and a true proposition, is all one,' the arbitrariness of truth itself.

... Nothing can be proved without understanding first the name of the thing in question. Now 'primary' propositions are nothing but definitions or parts of definitions, and these only are the principles of demonstration, *being truths constituted arbitrarily by the inventors of speech*, and therefore not to be demonstrated ...<sup>2</sup>

And:

From hence [that is, from the fact that "true and false belongs to speech and not to things"] also this may be deduced, that the first truths were arbitrarily made by those that first of all imposed names upon things, or received them from the imposition of others. For it is true (for example) that "man is a living creature," and *it is for this reason, that it pleased men to impose both those names on the same thing*.<sup>3</sup>

The metaphysical implications of such a view of the nature of truth are profoundly sceptical indeed. The realist in metaphysics always, we know, recognizes an objective order of things as, in some sense, 'given,' or pre-existent, or prior to the conceptions of the human mind and the propositions of human discourse; and believes, further, that the nature of this objective order is discoverable, and its relation to our mental worlds of ideas and to our linguistic universes of discourse, though not easy to determine, is yet capable of being determined. For the metaphysical nominalist like Hobbes no such objective order is 'given.' The world for him is "a universe of disconnected singulars" (to adopt Mr. Carré's phrase in speaking of Ockham's world-view)<sup>4</sup>: a world in which nothing is 'given' but bare discrete sense-particulars, and everything else—all order, all significance, all intelligibility—is created by the mind of man. And among these creations of the mind stands truth itself. Truth, on any view of the world other than the radically nominalistic view that Hobbes holds, might, in some sense, be supposed to be given: for even in the uneasily

<sup>1</sup> This useful distinction is used by Professor Moody in connexion with Aristotle's philosophy in his book *The Logic of William of Ockham* (Sheed and Ward, 1935).

<sup>2</sup> L.C., 3.9.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.8.  
<sup>4</sup> Meyrick A. Carré, *Phases of Thought in England*. (Oxford, 1949), pp. 162-3 et al.

noministic philosophy of one like Bertrand Russell,<sup>1</sup> truth is taken to consist in the relation of 'correspondence' between propositions and facts or states of affairs; and still in the more advanced nominalism of those modern 'physicalists' who in recent years set out their doctrines in *Erkenntnis*, it retains some relation to the real, that is, to the extra-linguistic, extra-mental world, through its supposed reducibility to 'protocol-statements.' For Hobbes, however, this work of man, truth, is entirely *created*, entirely severed from all dependence upon the real or extra-linguistic world, entirely *ad placitum* because entirely a matter of the "arbitrary imposition of names."

#### (v) Nominalism and Conceptualism

This is perhaps the place to say something briefly about the relation between Hobbes's nominalism and his conceptualism. A useful passage for illustrating the conceptualist elements in Hobbes's thought is the passage on 'evidence' in *Elements of Law* (I. 6.2.3). It occurs in the course of his discussion of the difference between 'truth' and 'knowledge.' "If truth be not evident," he says, "though a man hold it, yet is his knowledge of it no more than theirs that hold the contrary. For if truth were enough to make it knowledge, all truths were known: which is not so." Nor is perfect ratiocination by itself a guarantee of *true* knowledge: for—

Though he begin his ratiocination with true propositions, and proceed with perfect syllogisms and thereby make always true conclusions; yet are not his conclusions evident to him for want of the concomitance of conception with his words.

The crucial word 'evidence' is further defined as "the concomitance of a man's conception with the words that signify such conception in the act of ratiocination"; and the passage ends with the affirmation

Evidence is to truth as the sap is to the tree . . . For this evidence, which is meaning with our words, is the life of truth; without it truth is nothing worth.

The passage admits (I believe) of several interpretations. When Hobbes speaks of "the concomitance of a man's conception with the words that signify such conception in the act of ratiocination," one recalls that Ockham habitually defined 'signification' as *the act of signifying*,<sup>2</sup> and this may well be what Hobbes means to affirm here about 'evidence' when he says it is "meaning with our words." And if this is the case, then 'evidence' is being defined as a psychological

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Max Black speaks of Russell's 'uneasy nominalism' in a critique of his treatment of the problem of 'vagueness.' (Black, "Vagueness: An Exercise in Logical Analysis," in *Language and Philosophy*, p. 32, n. 12).

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Moody discusses this in his book *The Logic of William of Ockham*, pp. 44 et al.

phenomenon, and 'meaning' (or 'signifying') is the mere psychological act of 'seeing' the concomitance of conception with words—seeing that is, that a particular 'name' (a sound in the air or mark on paper) stands for, or 'signifies,' a particular 'conception' (a 'phantasm' or 'seeming' in the brain).

Alternatively, it is possible that the term 'conception' in the defining phrase "the concomitance of conception with his words" refers to what Aristotle regarded as the fundamental condition of discursive knowledge itself, namely, the recognition of identity and difference.<sup>1</sup> 'Evidence' would then mean the recognition that this is this, not that—that, for instance, a valid deduction from the premises is a valid deduction; and this would be a strong enough reason for insisting that 'truth' must be 'evident' in order that it may become 'knowledge,' and that 'evidence,' which is 'meaning with our words,' is therefore 'the life of truth.' Either interpretation is, I think, possible because Hobbes in his logic and epistemology owes much to both Ockham and Aristotle, and it is not likely that he would have missed these important points in their systems. The weight he himself attaches to what he calls 'evidence' would suggest, further, that it has as important a place in his theory of knowledge in *Elements of Law*<sup>2</sup> as the identification of 'meaning' with 'the act of meaning' had in Ockham's theory of knowledge, and the 'principle of identity' (in the sense indicated) in Aristotle's.

Even if neither of these explanations that I have suggested is correct, however, the passage remains as good an instance as any of Hobbes's conceptualism. Though for a radical nominalist like Hobbes nothing is 'given' but everything, except bare sense-experience, is 'created' by the human mind, and all *opera hominum* may consequently be viewed as systems of discourse, yet—those systems of discourse would be meaningless marks on paper or sounds in the air if 'evidence,' which is "the concomitance of a man's conception with his words," were absent. Without the 'conceptual' realization of meaning, in other words, there is no meaning. And that is why for Hobbes "evidence is to truth as the sap is to the tree"; for it alone creates meaning and truth in what would otherwise be a chaos of disconnected sense-experiences.

It has been argued that Hobbes's conceptualism, if not positively incompatible with his nominalism, at least modifies it in an important

<sup>1</sup> Aristotle, *Topics*, 102a, 9; *Post. An.*, 72b, 20–25; *Topics*, 157a, 25–30, and the whole discussion of the Principle of Contradiction in *Metaphysics*, Book I, Chs. 2–5).

<sup>2</sup> It is perhaps significant that the passage does not reappear in the corresponding sections of *Leviathan*.

way: modifies it to the extent, at any rate, of making it appear considerably less radical than it seems. John Laird, for instance, says that "Hobbes was a nominalist because he was a conceptualist," meaning (one presumes) that the conceptualism is in some sense logically prior to the nominalism and the nominalism therefore logically dependent upon the conceptualism. It is difficult to see this supposed causal connexion between Hobbes's nominalism and conceptualism. Hobbes *was* a nominalist and *happened* also to be a conceptualist. The nominalism is always and everywhere his fundamental position, with which everything else, including his conceptualism, is made consistent.

As to the supposed modifying effect of Hobbes's conceptualism upon his nominalism, this is so far from being the true relation between them in Hobbes's system (whatever may be the case in the abstract) that something almost exactly the opposite is the true relation. Hobbes's conceptualism does not modify his nominalism; on the contrary, it reinforces and confirms it. For to say that "evidence is the concomitance of a man's conception with his words" is *not* to say also that those 'conceptions' in any way reflect or represent or correspond to the 'things' from which they are derived. Those 'conceptions,' for Hobbes, are nothing but one kind of motion in matter, namely, 'phantasms' or 'seemings,' produced by another kind of motion in matter, namely 'things'; and no sort of correspondence between them is either affirmed or implied. Our conceptions, in short, bear no relation whatever to the 'real' nature of things: "To put 'genus' and 'species' for things, and 'definition' for the nature of any thing, as the writer of metaphysics have done, is not right, seeing they be only significations of what we think of the nature of things."<sup>1</sup> Consequently Hobbes's emphasis upon the concomitance of our 'conceptions' (that is, our 'phantasms' or 'seemings') with our 'words' does not in the least modify his main nominalistic doctrine—the doctrine that all definition is created by "the arbitrary imposition of names." For definition remains arbitrary or *ad placitum* in Hobbes's sense of the word 'arbitrary,' in the sense, that is, that our definitions (that is, our words) bear no knowable relation to the nature of things, but signify only our conceptions—"what we think of the nature of things." And while this definition of definition remains unmodified, Hobbes remains a radical nominalist, and his conceptualism remains powerless to modify that nominalism but can only confirm it.

Hobbes's account of reasoning as a process of 'reckoning' is entirely consistent with this nominalistic logic and metaphysic. Every body

<sup>1</sup> L.C., 2.10.

of knowledge (runs the argument), as it is truly 'scientific,' is demonstrative—that is, a system of propositions, 'primitive' propositions or definitions, together with 'derived' propositions. To that extent it is analogous to a mathematical calculus, and as such is created by the arithmetical operations of addition and subtraction, namely, *reckoning*.<sup>1</sup> In the account of 'reason' in *Leviathan*, the phraseology of 'reckoning' or 'computation' is used throughout with astonishing consistency:

We turn the *reckoning* of the consequences of things imagined in the mind into a *reckoning* of the consequences of appellations . . .<sup>2</sup>

This diversity of names may be reduced to four general heads. First, a thing may *enter into account* for 'matter' or 'body' . . . Secondly it may *enter into account* or be considered for some accident or quality. . . . Thirdly, we *bring into account* the properties of our bodies . . .<sup>3</sup>

He that takes up conclusions on the trust of authors, and doth not fetch them from the first items of every *reckoning*, which are the significations of names settled by definitions, loses his labour . . .<sup>4</sup>

and the celebrated aphorism—

For words are wise men's counters, they do but reckon by them; but they are the money of fools:<sup>5</sup>

where language is turned into a system of counters, to which values ('meanings') have been arbitrarily assigned, and which wise men, following the example of the mathematicians, will manipulate in accordance with prescribed rules of inference (or 'reckoning').

The connexion between this view of 'reasoning' and the central moral and political doctrine in *Leviathan* is plainly indicated in the very passage in which Hobbes defines "Reason, what it is":

. . . These operations are not incident to numbers only, but to all manner of things that can be added together, and taken one out of another . . . Writers of politics add together pactions to find men's *duties*; and lawyers, *laws* and *facts*, to find what is *right* and *wrong* in the actions of private men. In sum, in what matter soever there is place for *addition* and *subtraction*, there also is place for reason; and where these have no place, there *reason* has nothing at all to do.<sup>6</sup>

And that such a view of 'reasoning' presupposes also the 'atomistic' world-view of the metaphysical nominalist is equally plain. Since nothing is 'given' but physical particulars, or 'disconnected singulars,' there can be no such thing in the world as organic unity, and no possibility of organic connectedness. All connexion is artificially created; and it is created by those perfectly artificial, perfectly mechanical operations, addition and subtraction.

<sup>1</sup> L., Ch. 5.    <sup>2</sup> L., Ch. 4.    <sup>3</sup> L., I. 4 (pp. 22-3).    <sup>4</sup> Ibid., I. 5 (p. 26).  
<sup>5</sup> Ibid., I. 4 (p. 22).    <sup>6</sup> L., Ch. 4. Hobbes's emphasis.

The peculiar interest of Hobbes's scepticism for the philosophical reader is that it is the joint product of his radical nominalism in logic, in epistemology and in metaphysics. Nor is it necessary, even if it were possible, to decide the thorny question of priority—whether the nominalistic doctrine of meaning and truth came first, the universe of disconnected singulars afterwards, as the logical consequence of that doctrine; or whether it happened the other way about. This problem belongs to the history of Hobbes's intellectual development, and does not concern us here. Here it is sufficient to remark the comitance of the nominalist logic and epistemology and the nominalist metaphysic, to show their connexion, and to consider some of the more important consequences of that connexion that may be discovered in various parts of Hobbes's philosophy.

## II. PHYSICS AND LANGUAGE

Hobbes's theory of physics—'science' in the modern sense—is one important part of his philosophic system in which the effects of his nominalistic 'language-consciousness' may be discerned. For Hobbes, we have seen, a system of 'science' (or knowledge) must be demonstrative: this alone gives it the certainty that belongs to true knowledge as distinct from mere 'prudence,' which is knowledge by induction from experience and therefore never more than conjectural. "Experience," we remember, "concludeth nothing universally." Yet 'science' is for Hobbes also a knowledge of causal relations—the knowledge of things 'in their generation' and therefore in some sense, subject to empirical control:

... Philosophy is the knowledge we acquire, by true ratiocination, of appearances, or apparent effects, from the knowledge we have of some possible production or generation of the same; and of such production, as has been or may be, from the knowledge we have of the effects.<sup>1</sup>

How are these seemingly irreconcilable views of 'science' to be reconciled—'science' viewed, on the one hand, as a purely demonstrative system, and, on the other, as a knowledge of causal relations within the real physical world? That is the problem; and on its solution depends the fulfilment of Hobbes's grand philosophic ambition, to create a system of the world that shall fulfil at once the empirical and the rational conditions of true knowledge, that shall (in Thomas Salusbury's phrase) satisfy at once the course of nature and the discourse of the mind.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> L.C., 6.I.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Salusbury's translation of Galileo's "System of the World," in *Mathematical Collections* (London, 1661), p. 320. Professor Oakeshott, in his Introduction to his edition of *Leviathan* (p. xxii), rightly observes that

The solution is attempted in Book I of *De Corpore*, called *Of Logic and Computation*, in particular in those sections in which Hobbes gives his account of science as 'invention' or 'discovery.'<sup>1</sup> Here, as in neither of his earlier accounts of the same matter (in *Elements of Law* and *Leviathan*), he appears to distinguish, very carefully and very deliberately, between science as the 'discovery' of true causes, and science as demonstration, or 'method.' Thus, under the marginal head, "Method and science defined," he writes:

METHOD . . . in the study of philosophy is the shortest way of finding out effects by their known causes, or of causes by their known effects. But we are then said to know any effect, when we know that there be causes of the same, and in what subject those causes are, and in what subject they produce that effect, and in what manner they work the same. And this is the science of causes, or, as they call it, of the *διότι*. All other science, which is called the *ὅπῃ*, is either perception by sense, or the imagination remaining after such perception.<sup>2</sup>

We may leave aside the question of the 'other science'—which is to be taken only as the raw material, so to speak, of science proper, the science of causes—and fix our attention on the distinction between 'science' and 'method' that is being offered here. Such a distinction does suggest (a) that the 'true causes,' which are 'discovered' by the 'method' are, in some sense, extra-discursive, extra-mental entities, in some sense existents *in rerum natura*—not, that is, creations of the human mind; and (b) that 'method' is the mental (discursive or ratiocinative) operation which, in some sense, stands in contrast to those 'true causes' which are discovered by its means. The distinct names, 'science' and 'method,' do suggest that some such contrast is intended; and this suggestion is reinforced in a later section in the same chapter: ". . . And this much may serve for the method of invention. It remains that I speak of the method of teaching, that is of demonstration, and of the means by which we demonstrate."<sup>3</sup>

". . . one of the few internal tensions of his [Hobbes's] thought arose from an attempted but imperfectly achieved distinction between science and philosophy . . . between a knowledge (with all the necessary assumptions) of the phenomenal world and a theory of knowledge itself." Our discussion of Book I of *De Corpore* will confirm this observation. Yet it is not inaccurate to describe Book I of *De Corpore* as a theory of physics, or 'science' in the modern sense, since this, at any rate, is what Hobbes intended it to be; and the details of the attempt are, in any case, worth attention.

<sup>1</sup> I wish here to acknowledge a general debt to Professor F. Brandt's full and close discussions of the First Book of *De Corpore* in his book *Thomas Hobbes' Mechanical Conception of Nature* (1928). Though my own analysis differs in important points from his, it was his work on this difficult portion of Hobbes's doctrine of science that first drew my attention to it, suggested the central problem that it raises, and gave many invaluable hints towards its understanding.

<sup>2</sup> L.C., 6.1.

<sup>3</sup> L.C., 6.10.

What actually happens, however, is that the contrast is neither developed nor even further elucidated. On the contrary, it is almost immediately—in the next paragraph—dissolved; and this is accomplished by a curious and significant shift: by simply changing the question from a question about the *nature* of true causes into a question about *our knowledge* of true causes—that is, avoiding (or evading?) the metaphysical question by changing it into an epistemological question. This is the passage:

The first beginnings of knowledge are the phantasms of sense and imagination; and that there be such phantasms we know well enough by nature; but to know why they be, or from what causes they proceed, is the work of ratiocination, which consists . . . in composition, and division, or resolution. There is therefore no method, by which we find out the causes of things, but is either composite or resolute, or partly composite, and partly resolute . . . etc.<sup>1</sup>

The shift is unmistakable; for Hobbes does here *begin* by talking about the only ‘things’ that he does believe to exist *in rerum natura*, namely, “the phantasms of sense and imagination.” But already in this first sentence the shift has begun: “that there *be* such phantasms we *know* well enough”; and so the crucial shift, from the nature of ‘true causes’ to our knowledge of them, is easy: “. . . but to know why they be, or from what causes they proceed, is the work of ratiocination . . . etc.” And thus the threatened distinction between ‘science’ and ‘method,’ is avoided—the distinction, that is, between a ‘real’ account of science as the discovery of ‘true causes’ and a nominal account of science as ‘the work of ratiocination.’ Science, the ‘science of causes,’ turns out to be after all identical with ‘method,’ as this later passage finally makes clear:

And seeing teaching is nothing but leading the mind of him we teach, to the knowledge of our inventions, in the track by which we attained the same with our mind; therefore, *the same method that served for our invention will serve also for demonstration to others*, saving that we omit the first part of method which proceeded from the sense of things to universal principles, which, because they are principles, cannot be demonstrated . . .<sup>2</sup>

‘Science,’ then, is identical with ‘method’; and method is ratiocination; and ratiocination (we remember) is ‘reckoning,’ that is, the manipulation of names. And, consequently, from the impulse of the rationalist mind to view science as, exclusively, demonstrative or ‘methodical,’ reinforced by the nominalist view of demonstration as ‘reckoning,’ the account that finally emerges of the science of causes, physics, is, characteristically, highly nominal. The distinctive features of the supposedly empirical method of discovery, namely, ‘resolution’ and ‘composition,’ are presented as “the work of ratiocination,” that is, reckoning, that is, manipulation of words; and the

<sup>1</sup> L.C., 6.2.

<sup>2</sup> L.C., 6.12.

science of true causes emerges from this process of philosophical alchemy as a system of discourse or 'language.' Physics, in other words, is virtually identified with the language of physics, with 'physical discourse'; and the 'resolutive' and 'compositive' phases of scientific method are presented as complementary aspects of the operation of the *language* of physics.<sup>1</sup>

I have attempted to construct something in the nature of a 'concrete model' of Hobbes's view of science as it has been here interpreted, by suggesting the kind of analysis of the term *square* (he himself uses it as an example)<sup>2</sup> that would fit what I have taken to be his peculiar conception of physics as at once *scientia realis* and *scientia rationalis*. Beginning with the 'resolutive' phase, it would take some such form as the following:

1. When we take SQUARE as thing and first resolve it into its 'components,' i.e. line, plane, limitation, angle, equality, rectangularity, etc., what we are at the same time doing is to *define* SQUARE as a 'substance'-word in terms of a series of 'property'-propositions.
2. When, next, we discern the causes of these 'components' viewed as things (*entia realia*), what we are at the same time doing is to

<sup>1</sup> It has been no part of my purpose here to criticize Hobbes's theory of science in *De Corpore*, but only to elucidate that theory and to show its connexion with his doctrine of meaning and truth. The direction in which such a critique might perhaps most profitably be pursued may, however, be indicated. This direction is set if we remember that for Hobbes definition is always nominal. That, perhaps, is the ultimate source—or one way of describing the ultimate source—of the difficulties that must be felt about his view of physics as science. For to characterize all definition as 'nominal' is proper (and true) when one is concerned with the 'logic of science,' when (to employ a modern distinction) one is engaged in a 'meta-linguistic' analysis of the language of physics ('scientific discourse'). But when one is concerned with the science, physics, itself; when one is seeking to discover particular physical truths, or—in terms of the same distinction—seeking to create an 'object-language,' as distinct from defining the terms, expressions, etc., of such an object-language *in* a meta-language—then another kind of definition is required: the kind that has traditionally been called 'real' definition, and has been so called because it purports to define things, not words; and though not necessarily the 'essence' of a thing, yet those of its properties that distinguish it from other things and are in that sense definitive; but are in any case properties of the thing, not the name of that thing. The whole question of 'real' and 'nominal' definition, however, is too large to be pursued here. It has received some attention in recent years, and among the most illuminating of these recent discussions is Morris Weitz's, in his essay "Analysis and the Unity of Russell's Philosophy" (in *The Library of Living Philosophers*, Vol. V, pp. 110 ff.). It could serve as a useful starting-point for a critique of Hobbes's theory of science in the First Book of *De Corpore*.

<sup>2</sup> L.C., 6.4.

assign logical antecedents ('reasons,' which are *entia rationis*) to the components viewed as 'property'-propositions.

And:

3. When we say that the sum of these causes of the real components or elements of SQUARE equals the cause of SQUARE, as thing,<sup>1</sup> this is to say at the same time that the sum of the logical antecedents of the property-propositions composing the meaning of the word SQUARE equals the sum of the 'primitive' definitions (or axioms) of the physico-mathematical theory which is the 'reason' of SQUARE.

We may re-state the argument more simply, perhaps, as follows: To speak of the 'cause' of SQUARE (following Hobbes's own curious mode of expression) is to speak of the sum of the real, physical components, or elements, or properties, of a real, physical entity—a square; and these real physical components, or elements, or properties taken together, are the generative source, that is, the 'cause' *in rerum natura*, of the real physical entity, the square. To speak, analogously, of 'the reason' of SQUARE is to speak of the sum of a number of propositions containing the word 'square' (e.g. "A square is a plane figure," "A square contains four angles," "A square is bounded by four straight lines," etc.), which together make up the *definition*, that is, the 'explanation,' and in that sense, the 'reason,' of 'square,' as a rational (that is, discursive, or logical, or linguistic) entity. But definitions which 'explain' in this way are in fact the primitive propositions or axioms of a theory, from which it is logically possible to derive the propositions assigning specific properties to the entity square. Consequently it is that theory, viewed as a system of discourse, that is finally the 'explanation,' or 'reason,' of 'square.'

4. Now (returning to Hobbes), the cause of all causes is motion:

... They have all but one universal cause which is motion. For the variety of all figures arises out of the variety of those motions by which they are made; and motion cannot be understood to have any other cause besides motion....<sup>2</sup>

And to say *this* is to say that the mathematical equations expressing the most general relations of forces in nature are at the same time the axioms or primitive definitions of the most comprehensive theory (that is, system of discourse) of the physical universe laid down by the masters of that science.

Thus far the 'resolutive' phase of scientific method—viewed, simultaneously, as a process of discovery, by which the real causes of phenomena *in rerum natura* may be known, and a process of demon-

<sup>1</sup> Thus Hobbes, in the passage at L.C. 6.4.: "... If we can find out the causes of these [i.e. the 'universal properties of square'] we may compound them altogether into the cause of square."

<sup>2</sup> L.C., 6.5.

stration (or ratiocination), by which we may know also the 'reasons,' viz. 'explanations,' or definitions, of the *names* of those things. The 'synthetic' or 'compositive' phase can be viewed in the same way.<sup>1</sup> Having discovered (and stated as mathematical formulae) the causes (and thus the 'reasons') of the components (as 'elements' and as 'propositions'), and so, by addition, the cause (and 'reason') of SQUARE (as 'thing' and as 'name'), we now ask, Given motion as the universal cause, what effects in the real world must follow from such a cause? And that is the same as to ask, Given a comprehensive *theory* of motion, what inferences (or 'consequence-propositions') can be derived from the primitive definitions (or axioms, or 'antecedent-propositions') of that theory of motion viewed as a system of discourse, or language-system? And when the effects (or consequence-propositions) have been derived, by the rules of transformation laid down for that theory, from the universal cause, motion (that is, from the primitive *definitions*, or axioms, of the *theory* of motion), the system of the world, as far as Hobbes is concerned, is complete. For Hobbes, as we know, cared little about the experimental verification of the inferences: that (he would have said) was the business of the practising physicist, not the philosopher. The philosopher's business was, simply, to give an account of science such that it should yield an answer to the question, What *must* a physical theory be like in order that it should satisfy at once the course of nature and the discourse of the mind? And Hobbes's answer is that it must be a rational system, that is, a system of discourse, or a system of propositions, which satisfies at once the empirical criterion of truth and the logical criterion of deductive rigour. As the 'resolutive' process begins with the mathematical analysis of observed effects, the primitive propositions may be said to be empirically grounded; and as these primitive propositions *qua* definitions, along with (logical) rules of transformation, may be rendered so precise that only one set of consequences shall be derivable from those primitive definitions by those rules of transformation, the system achieves also complete deductive rigour.

<sup>1</sup> A full and fascinating account of the history of the resolution-composition distinction in Western speculation on the philosophy of science may be found in a series of three articles by Dr. A. C. Crombie published in *Discovery* (Nov. and Dec., 1952, Jan., 1953). Dr. Crombie's invaluable researches into the origins of the Galilean view of science, stretching back through Ockham and Robert Grosseteste to Ptolemy and Archimedes and, ultimately, to Aristotle, place in their full historical perspective Hobbes's discussions in Book I of *De Corpore*. For Galileo, one remembers is the source of much of Hobbes's wisdom in *De Corpore*, by his own explicit and unusually generous acknowledgement; and it is not unlikely that he was acquainted also with the writings at Padua in the fifteenth and earlier sixteenth centuries.

The emphasis throughout Hobbes's account of the science of physics is on the deductive rigour of the system. For Hobbes, truth, and therefore 'science,' remains, in the end, demonstrative; and it is for this reason that he ranks as one of the most thoroughgoing rationalists of the seventeenth century. But he does share also Francis Bacon's (and Galileo's) perception that the satisfactions of demonstrative truth are not enough for the philosophic mind; and it is this perception that impels him to take into account also the empirical aspect. This he does by acknowledging that at least 'the first part of the method,' namely 'resolution,' must 'proceed from the sense of things,' that is, from empirical observation, in order that our primitive definitions may be grounded *in nature*: in other words, that they may be empirically meaningful and empirically true. What he cares little about, however, is the 'verification-or-falsification' of predictions derived from those empirically grounded definitions, or hypotheses; and this, of course, leaves his understanding of scientific method seriously incomplete. Nevertheless, if our 'model' of the double movement of Hobbes's thought about science is a true model, what remains remarkable about Hobbes's account of science in Part I of *De Corpore* is his resolute effort to view physics as a discursive structure, a system of 'language,' implying, as this does, the larger effort to view the whole scientific enterprise *sub specie linguae*. And in this respect at least Hobbes's philosophy of science goes beyond that of both Bacon and Galileo.

### III. THE ANALYSIS OF 'SEDITION' AND 'GOD'

If "truth, and a true proposition, is all one" means for Hobbes that truth is a property of 'language' or discourse and not of 'things,' it is to be expected that the truth belonging to those *opera hominum* that are concerned specifically with the conduct of men, that is, their systems of law, morality, and religion, should also be 'of propositions.' A language-consciousness such as Hobbes's, logically grounded as it is in his thoroughly nominalistic doctrine of meaning and truth, is for that reason a settled habit of the mind; and as such almost commits him to viewing all systems of law, morality and religion as language-systems or systems of discourse. Hobbes, we find, shirks no part of the logical responsibilities of that commitment, but, on the contrary, pursues the consequences of his nominalism to their furthest logical limit, and applies them with rigorous consistency to the fundamental problems of commonwealth, morality, and religion.

The fullest evidence of the range, magnitude and audacity of Hobbes's application of his nominalistic philosophy to these problems is of course to be found in *Leviathan*. I mentioned earlier on the doctrines in *Leviathan* that most conspicuously show its influence.

This influence, however, is almost equally pervasive in the earlier *Elements of Law*, and it is from this earlier work that I have chosen two representative instances of Hobbes's nominalistic analysis of political and religious concepts. The first is his account of 'sedition,' the second of 'God.'

### (i) 'Sedition'

Hobbes desires, in this first draft of his civil philosophy, to characterize and expose that most virulent of all forms of social disorder, 'sedition.' He does not indeed go so far as to say that the *cause* of sedition is failure to observe the linguistic usages established in a given community: for the cause he must (and does) go to his doctrine of the passions. But he does say that wrong linguistic usage is the *defining mark* of sedition: that is how, in the first instance, we identify the phenomenon. With characteristic audacity, therefore, Hobbes states the criterion of recognition as follows:

... The other kind of knowledge [science] is the remembrance of the names or appellations of things, and how everything is called which is, in matters of common conversation, a remembrance of pacts and covenants of men made among themselves concerning how to be understood of one another. And this kind of knowledge is generally called science, and the conclusions thereof truth. *But when men remember not how things are named by general agreement, but either mistake or misname things, or name them aright by chance, they are not said to have science, but opinion;* and the conclusions then proceeding are uncertain and for the most part erroneous . . . They [the authors of sedition] be such as name things not according to their true and generally agreed upon names; but call right and wrong, good and bad according to their passions, or according to the authorities of such as they admire . . . It is required therefore in an author of sedition that he think right that which is wrong; and profitable that which is pernicious; and consequently that there be in him *sapientiae parum, little wisdom.*<sup>1</sup>

The point is made again in a context still more comprehensive. Social order itself (Hobbes declares) is indissolubly linked with linguistic order; and it is therefore one of the main tasks of the sovereign to fix the meanings of all disputed terms, for in so doing he will minimize out of existence the main sources of social friction:

In the state of nature, where every man is his own judge, *and differeth from other concerning the names and appellations of things, and from those differences arise quarrels and breach of peace;* it was necessary there should be a common measure of all things that might fall in controversy; as for example: of what is to be called right, what good, what virtue, what much, what little, what *meum* and *tuum*, what pound, what quart, &c. For in these things private judgments may differ and beget controversy.<sup>2</sup>

It is the business of the sovereign, in other words, to provide the 'common measure,' that is, to create civil laws; and to do that means

<sup>1</sup> E.L., II. 8.13.

<sup>2</sup> E.L., II. 10.8.

(on this view) to lay down definitions—of right and wrong, profitable and unprofitable, virtuous and vicious, so that “the use and definition of all terms not agreed upon and tending to controversy” shall be established. This is also the answer to Humpty Dumpty's libertine attitude to language. Certainly (Hobbes is saying) you may make words mean what you please; but then you must be prepared to live perpetually in the state of nature outlined in Chapter XIII of *Leviathan*. If, however, you desire peaceable social living—and this is what reason, pricked on by those fundamental passions, self-preservation and the fear of violent death, would urge you to desire—the first ‘natural right’ you must be prepared to sacrifice is that of using words as you please. This right, above all other rights, must be vested in the sovereign, who must have absolute authority to fix the meanings of “all names tending to controversy,” and absolute power to enforce their observance.

(ii) ‘God’

What is true of civil philosophy is also true of religion. As Hobbes reduces one of the central concepts of the theory of commonwealth to ‘a question of language,’ so also he reduces one of the central concepts of Christian theology, the concept of ‘God,’ to a question of linguistic usage.

... Now forasmuch as we give names not only to things natural, but also to supernatural; and by all names we ought to have some meaning and conception: it followeth in the next place, to consider what thoughts and imaginations of the mind we have, when we take into our mouths the most blessed name of God, and the names of those virtues we attribute to him ...<sup>1</sup>

Hobbes says “thoughts and imaginations of the mind”; but his actual treatment of the problem shows that what he means is the observable behaviour of men. It is the observable behaviour of men when they take into their mouths the most blessed name of God that determines the *meaning* of the word ‘God’—or, rather, the meaning of propositions containing the word ‘God.’ Hobbes’s argument runs as follows:

Since God is, by Christian definition, incomprehensible, we can know nothing about his real nature; and by this Hobbes means that statements about God’s attributes are not empirically verifiable. We can indeed know *that* he is; and the proposition ‘There is a God’ is a legitimate deduction from the existence of the created universe, and is therefore logically true or valid as it is

<sup>1</sup> E.L., I. xi. i. The profane wit of the equivocal allusion to the sacrament of the Eucharist in this passage (“when we take into our mouths the most sacred name of God”) would have done little, one suspects, to render more acceptable to Hobbes’s Christian contemporaries his account of Christian worship.

derivable from the axioms or primitive definitions of this or that system of natural theology.<sup>1</sup> But the logical truth of the proposition 'There is a God' does not help us to assign a meaning to statements concerning God's divine attributes and men's 'affections to Godward.' The meaning and truth of these statements is established by reference to the observable behaviour of men; and for Hobbes the civil philosopher, intent upon constructing a theory of a Christian commonwealth, the observable behaviour of men in this connexion means the habitual religious attitudes and practices of Christians. Thus: the words *incomprehensible* and *infinite* signify "our inability and defect of power to conceive anything concerning his [God's] nature"; and the words omniscient, omnipotent, just, merciful, etc., our acknowledgement of his power and our habitual ways of paying homage to that power—by praising, magnifying, blessing, praying, giving oblations and sacrifice, which are "the same with the [natural] signs of the honour due to our superiors." And again: to love God *means* "to obey his commandments and to love one another"; to trust to God Almighty *means* "to refer to his good pleasure all that is above our power to effect"; to trust in Christ *means* "to acknowledge him for God"; and "to cast and roll ourselves on Christ" means "to acknowledge Jesus Christ as the son of the living God."<sup>2</sup> All the emphasis, we observe, is consistently upon our visible acts of acknowledgement: what we say and what we do defines the meaning of what 'interiorly' we think, feel, experience 'to Godward.'

It need hardly be insisted that this is not the only way of interpreting Hobbes's account of God and Christian worship. One may take the view that this is Hobbes, the civil theologian, exhibiting a purely 'anthropological' interest in the religious practices and observances of his own community. (This is the view that Professor Oakeshott proposes;<sup>3</sup> and it is a view that certainly receives much support from the tone and attitude in which the reinterpretations of the Scriptures in Part III of *Leviathan* are conducted.) Or one may say that this is Hobbes, the positivist, reducing the religion that preaches the circumcision of the heart to a collection, merely, of 'instituted' practices. Or one may take the view that we have chosen to take here—that this is Hobbes, the radical nominalist, re-stating the truths of the Christian gospel as facts 'about language'; this is what we *mean* when we take into our mouths the most blessed *name* of God; and apart from that (instituted) meaning of that name, we know nothing about God.

Newnham College, Cambridge.

<sup>1</sup> E.L., I. xi.2.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., I. xi.12.  
<sup>3</sup> Oakeshott, Introduction to *Leviathan* (Basil Blackwell's Political Texts), p. lxii.

# JOHN LOCKE AND NATURAL LAW

W. VON LEYDEN, D.Phil.

It has been said, and few would deny, that John Locke is as important as the founder of philosophical liberalism as he is as the founder of the empiricist theory of knowledge. Though he was a most versatile thinker, writing on philosophy, politics, medicine, education, religion, and economics, and on all these with the knowledge of an expert and the influence of an authority, his fame no doubt derives on the one hand from his treatises on Toleration and Civil Government, and from his *Essay on Human Understanding* on the other. Whenever these are expounded by scholars, the political writings are discussed independently of the *Essay* and the *Essay* independently of the political writings. The reason for this is obviously that scholars have seen very little connexion between Locke's principal works. This has been changed with the appearance of a manuscript in which are preserved eight essays on the law of nature written by Locke in Latin shortly after the Restoration of 1660 and thirty years before the appearance in print of his major works. This manuscript has been published by me, and it is now possible to recognize that Locke's two main bodies of doctrine, namely his political theory and his theory of knowledge, have a common ground and that this lies in his early doctrine of natural law. Admittedly, the notion of a natural law can be seen to be of central importance in his treatise on Civil Government and it also plays its part in the *Essay*. But disappointingly little is said by Locke about this notion in either of these writings, and it is not until the appearance of his essays on natural law that we learn that there is an important relation between the two main parts of his teaching and what this relation is.

In this paper I wish to examine Locke's arguments concerning the existence and binding force of natural law. I have already touched upon certain aspects of this question in the introduction to my edition, but there they were related to their historical setting and other side-issues. Now my purpose is more specific. I am also concluding this paper with an entry in Locke's *Journal*, which contains certain basic ideas of his theory of natural law and which has for some reason or other escaped publication.

The law of nature as it occurs in Locke's philosophy is not the same as one of Galileo's or Newton's so-called laws of nature: it is not concerned with physical phenomena, their motion or regularity. In the sense in which Locke uses the term, it refers to human behaviour and to a moral law. In this sense the notion of a law of nature has had a well-known history among moralists, political theorists, jurists, and theologians before and after Locke's time.

The first perhaps to introduce the idea was Aristotle. He contrasted the uniform behaviour of things in nature with the varieties of human codes of behaviour. Fire, he said, always burns alike no matter where or when it is lit; whether in Greece or in Persia, to-day or a thousand years ago. On the other hand the customs of men, their moral and municipal laws vary from place to place and change from one time to another. However, there is for Aristotle one form of moral law which is eternal and immutable and has the same force everywhere; and because this law is supposed to be as uniform as a law governing natural phenomena he refers to it as a *natural* moral law, sharply distinguishing it from man-made laws which he calls conventional.

This idea of a natural law obtained great influence throughout the period when the Roman Empire spread and the whole of civilized humanity was thought to form one universal community, in which all men were equal by virtue of their common rational nature. The stoic philosophers and the Roman lawyers elaborated this idea and Cicero gave it a famous definition. He speaks of true law as being right reason in agreement with nature, of universal application and unchanging; that there is no need for us to look outside ourselves for an interpreter of it, though God is the author of this law and the judge who enforces it.

That Christianity, filling the vacuum caused by the breakdown of the Roman empire, adopted the belief in a law of nature can be seen from the fact that the idea of natural law appears as a basic conception both in the law-books of the Christian emperor Justinian and in Canon law. Throughout the Middle Ages the ultimate appeal regarding morals, politics, law and also divinity was to natural law, and by natural law the schoolmen meant a law promulgated by God in a natural way and known by reason, i.e. a law other than God's positive law which is known by revelation. Natural law together with the law laid down in the Scriptures was thus regarded as constituting the whole of the divine law. As such it was accepted as an objective 'rule and measure,' an absolute controlling principle.

The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as we know, witnessed the emergence of a secular morality, of humanism and the new outlook of the Renaissance. It was in connexion with this new outlook and with the advent of Protestantism which advocated the 'priesthood of all believers' and the necessity of toleration that natural law came to be regarded as a body of individual rights, of subjective claims and thus mainly as a liberating, rather than controlling principle. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the study of natural law was pursued by jurists on the Continent who thought this law to be independent of theological presuppositions and the result of a purely scientific construction, a matter of mathematical deduction. At the same time, while British moralists attempted to provide ethics with

a rational foundation, Anglicans sought in the light of contemporary knowledge to redefine the place of natural law within Christian apologetics.

Throughout the nineteenth century, owing to the advance of critical and sceptical arguments, there was a marked tendency to reject many of the traditional criteria of morality and to adopt positivist approaches, particularly in legal theory. In fact, the rise of modern jurisprudence is characterized by the abandonment of the theory of natural law. Also most modern philosophers, analysts as well as positivists, have come to regard this notion as obsolete. Yet we find that between the two wars and again in recent times a number of thinkers have admitted that they cannot dispense with this concept. While admitting this, some would nevertheless maintain that natural law and the theology with which this is associated is pure superstition. For them it is only because the facts involved in law include the *ideas* men have of certain general or supernatural characteristics that the legal philosopher must take them into account. On the other hand, there are contemporary thinkers who genuinely believe in some sort of natural law and make this the basis of their own theories.

It is certainly interesting in this connexion to note that it is only in Russia that no traces of natural-law theory have existed at any time. Though Russia, like the West, has a Christian tradition, it differs from the West in having no humanist tradition. And the idea of a natural law, as I have tried to show, was derived in the first instance from pre-Christian thought, that of Aristotle, the Stoics, and Cicero: it is intimately linked with the humanist belief in the efficacy of man's reason, the freedom of his will, and his moral responsibility.

Having sketched the historical development of the idea of natural law, let us consider what doctrine Locke contributed in his published works. His teaching in the *Second Treatise of Government* can be summarized as follows:

The law of nature is a declaration of God's will and a standard of right and wrong. It is a law that already governs the state of nature, i.e. a pre-social state in which all men are free and equal, and in which they live together in peace. If men make promises to one another in the state of nature, they must consider themselves bound by them, 'for truth and keeping faith belong to men as men, and not as members of society.' It is likewise according to this law and prior to any positive civil laws that each man's private property is determined. Though God has given the earth and all its fruits to men in common, the law of nature sets bounds to what each man is allowed to appropriate and keep for himself. Since within these bounds a person's 'right and conveniency' go together, there can be little room for quarrels about property. Further, for Locke part of God's purpose in creating man was to 'put him under strong obligations of necessity,

convenience, and inclination to drive him into society, as well as to fit him with understanding and language to continue and enjoy it. Throughout man's life in society and under political government, the obligations of the law of nature remain valid, and it is only as they are founded on this law that the municipal laws of countries are just laws. In general, political power for Locke is justified only in so far as it preserves men's natural rights, especially those of life and property. Government is thus limited both by natural law and by men's rights, and these two came to be almost identical for Locke. On the other hand, what man did not possess in the state of nature he cannot resign to the community when he enters it: since he had no arbitrary right in the state of nature to act against the law of nature, i.e. to destroy himself or others, or to take away property which is not his, there should not be any such arbitrary power in society.

It can be seen that the part played by natural law in Locke's political theory is indeed fundamental. It is because he believes this law to be the law of the state of nature, and this state of nature to be not altogether annulled when it is superseded by men's life in society, that for him natural law remains valid in society and in fact sets limits to political government. To put the point less metaphorically: because he is rational, man, according to Locke, is eternally subject to natural law, itself a rational law, regardless of whether or not he lives in an established society.

Unfortunately, despite the basic importance of natural law for Locke's political theory, there is little real discussion of it in any of his mature published writings. In a passage of his *Second Treatise of Government* he even expressly declines an investigation of the particulars of this law; yet what we should like him to tell us particularly is how he thinks we come to know natural law, and how and to what extent it can be said to be binding. In my view, Locke tended in his later years to regard the notion of a law of nature as a mere premise of his thought, as something he believed in but barely investigated. The reason for this attitude, I think, is to be found in difficulties he had in reconciling the notion of this law with some of his mature doctrines. For instance, the development of his hedonistic views and his philosophy of language in the *Essay* had made it difficult for him to attempt a full exposition of natural law or even to believe in it whole-heartedly.

However, with the discovery of Locke's early manuscript on natural law we are in a position to fill in the picture which is left rather vague in his mature works. We can see now that most of his remarks about the law of nature in the *Second Treatise* and the *Essay* have their origin in his early essays. In particular, two crucial questions (about which there is hardly any discussion at all in his mature writings) obviously exercised his mind when he was writing

the essays, i.e. the epistemological question—how do we know the law of nature?—and the moral question—how and to what extent is that law binding?

Because of the relatively full account which the essays provide of Locke's views on natural law, it is also possible now to point to definite weaknesses in his theory and to state one's criticisms in precise terms. In a sense it is not surprising to find that the thought of publishing his early work on natural law receded from Locke's mind and that the moral doctrines of his youth were not wholly absorbed in the writings of his maturity. There is a great deal of ambiguity in this notion of a law of nature, and a philosopher naturally feels called upon to disentangle the complex of different issues that it contains.

The concept that has given rise to confusion in theories of natural law is that of reason or rationality, and I propose now to investigate the meaning of this term in so far as it concerns us here.

If asked exactly what commands form part of the law of nature, Locke and most other theorists, I believe, would include the following: to preserve life, to beget and bring up children, to worship God, to obey parents, to show gratitude to benefactors, to respect another's property, and to live in society with other men. Now all these commands have a show of truth or reason and imply duties that would seem to be obvious and readily acceptable to common sense. However, other dictates of this law might not seem to be equally patent, and it has therefore been considered necessary for man, in order that he may know his duties, to employ his mental faculties, i.e. his senses and his understanding. One of the reasons, in fact, why natural law has been called a *natural* law is that the knowledge of it is said to be acquired by man's *natural* faculties, i.e. sense-perception and reason, the joint exercise of which constitutes what Locke and others called the 'light of nature.' The 'light of nature' is thus reason and the law of nature is a law of reason, a law that does not bind children, idiots, or animals, precisely because they are by nature devoid of understanding in the ordinary sense.

To conceive of law as a law of reason has no doubt advantages, particularly that of making it capable of treatment apart from man's emotional nature and thereby securing for it complete impartiality. 'Law,' as Aristotle has said, 'is reason free from all passion and a neutral authority.' But—and here we come to the crucial point—does the conception of law as a law of reason imply that it is possible to justify it rationally, and if so, has any one of the many theorists who throughout the ages have made attempts in this direction been successful?

I am inclined to answer both these questions by saying that a rational defence of natural law is bound to fail because it is liable to

involve confused ideas about reason. Issues that should be clearly distinguished from one another in any truly rational exposition are obscured if one passes from statements concerning matters of fact to definitions, thence to statements about ways of knowledge, to judgments of value, and finally to logical truths, assuming throughout that each of the passages is a step in one and the same sort of inferential process, and that each is concerned with one and the same meaning of rationality.

It can be shown, I believe, that a confusion of this kind occurs in every theory of natural law: I can only give one example here, and I will try to show how the confusion arises in Locke's theory. The line of my enquiry will follow what I take to be the logical steps of his argument. They are briefly these: Locke passes from the factual statement that man possesses reason to the conclusion that reason is his essential characteristic and hence to the assumption that reason leads to the discovery of moral truths and, if properly employed, to the discovery of one and the same set of moral truths, i.e. natural law. From this he is led to infer ethical assertions to the effect that the moral standards discovered by reason are themselves rational and that they are commands binding on all men. From this he passes to the belief that the validity of such commands can be proved by reason, and even shown to be necessary in the same way as a geometrical demonstration or a logical deduction.

Locke's starting-point is simple: it is the factual statement that men possess reason and use their reason. The fact that some men cannot reason and that some of those who can do not is admitted by Locke, and he refers to idiots and children and to those who because of their emotional nature or because they are lazy or careless, make no proper use of their reason. In spite of this admission, his next step is to assert that men not only can reason but that reason is their defining property and that therefore their special function is to exercise it, i.e. that they are obliged to use their reason.

Locke's inference here is from the matter-of-fact proposition—if it is a matter-of-fact proposition—that all men are rational, to the statement—which is a definition—that in order to be truly men, men must be rational. This statement is not so much about an indisputable fact as a belief derived from Aristotle's idea of 'fixed natures.' Though definitions depend in some sense on evidence, they are not empirical statements, i.e. statements about fact, which can be either true or false; hence definitions cannot be validated or invalidated by statements of a purely factual kind. Moreover, from a statement about man's defining characteristic, i.e. a statement that is neither a moral one nor a necessary one, the *moral* proposition is inferred that he has a duty to live in conformity with his essential nature. This conformity is in its turn twofold: it may mean that it is man's duty to use reason

and also that he has a duty to obey reason, i.e. to accept the findings of reason. Further, it is implied in Locke's whole argument that the very question at issue, namely whether reason is an essential characteristic of men and whether they are therefore obliged to use it is decided affirmatively by reason itself. I conclude then that we are here confronted with various meanings of the term reason which Locke does not disentangle, and also with statements of different kinds so that it is not always possible to pass from one to the other and to apply to each the same sort of proof.

Let us now consider Locke's answer to the question how men come to know natural law.

Obviously, in connexion with this question, reason will have to be discussed on two levels: firstly, as a mental 'activity' of man leading to the production or discovery of moral truth; secondly, as the spiritual product of this activity, consisting of a body of rational principles or rules of conduct. Locke is careful to distinguish between the two meanings of reason. By the first he understands the discursive faculty of the mind which seeks to discover truth by forming arguments from things known to things unknown. By the second he understands a set of moral truths which can become an object of knowledge and a rule of action, and this he calls 'right reason.' Whereas for him the discursive faculty like the organs of sense is inborn in man, 'right reason' is not. And for him also, the moral truths coming before the mind are not made or dictated by human reason, but merely discovered and interpreted by it. Thus in a way he still regards human reason as a sort of cause of which truth is the effect: it does not bring truth into existence but it leads to its knowledge. I will not raise here the question whether reason can be regarded as a cause rather than simply as a way of doing or considering something; nor will I examine whether rules of conduct are discovered rather than made, as the study of anthropology would suggest. I think however that Locke's belief in the causal efficacy of reason was a half-hearted one since according to him reason cannot be regarded as a source of knowledge. By itself, he would say, reason provides no primary notions and it therefore requires some material which can serve as a starting-point for its operations. According to him the material in question is provided by sense-perception.

It is here, in connexion with his early theory of natural law that Locke's empiricism, his well-known emphasis on knowledge by the senses, has its origin. For this reason I said at the beginning of my paper that Locke's two main bodies of doctrine, namely his theory of knowledge and his political philosophy, have a common ground and that this lies in his early doctrine of natural law.

The steps whereby in Locke's view reason leads to the knowledge of natural law from such data as the senses supply are briefly these:

Our senses tell us not only of bodies and their motions but also of beauty and regularity in all parts of the world. Since this beauty and regularity must be the result of some superior design, reason infers the existence of a most wise and powerful Creator. This argument from design together with the so-called anthropological argument are singled out by Locke from among the traditional proofs of God's existence precisely because these two arguments are derived from sense-experience and, apart from rational inference, require no further support, whereas all other such proofs presuppose *a priori* notions which Locke is unwilling to accept. Locke goes on to show that since God is not only powerful but also wise, He has designed the world for some purpose and that we find in everything a definite rule or pattern appropriate to its nature. God's purpose in creating man was that he should live according to reason. Two particular functions he is intended to perform are to worship God and to live in society with other men.

What Locke has endeavoured to establish so far is firstly that there exists a law-maker, i.e. some superior power to which man is rightly subject, and secondly that this law-maker has expressed a will, this being the law of nature. Thus in Locke's view it is reason in co-operation with sense-experience which reveals the existence of a natural law and also the dictates of this law. The whole of Locke's argument here is derived from the scholastics and there is nothing original about it except perhaps his insistence on the part played by sense-perception. Whether novel or not, one may wonder if the argument forms the right approach to the question at issue. When asking himself whether natural law can be known, Locke does not for a moment consider the possibility that this law, and expressions of value generally, might not belong to the class of things of which it makes sense to say that they are known in the ordinary sense of the word, i.e. that statements about them can be justified by reference to empirical facts, to rules of inference, or to self-evident truths. Locke does not face this issue and instead makes the *proper employment* of man's natural faculties a necessary and sufficient condition for the knowledge of natural law. Yet no matter to what extent men's senses and their reason are found to be efficient, this efficiency is no criterion by which to decide whether natural law is a proper object of knowledge. Such a decision must be derived from an analysis of the concept of natural law rather different from the one Locke offered.

The next step in Locke's argument again consists of an inference: he passes from what he has hitherto established to ethical assertions concerning the binding force of natural law. Having shown that man's reason can lead to the discovery of certain rational principles, he goes on to conclude that man is morally obliged to accept these findings of his reason. In other words, Locke starts with certain statements

of fact, i.e. statements about human nature, containing no judgments of value; he then passes to certain metaphysical and theological statements which contain no moral words either; from these statements he draws a conclusion about what men *ought to do*, as if the conclusion of a valid argument could contain anything, e.g. an '*ought*,' which is not contained in the premises. The point that it is impossible to deduce an ethical conclusion from premises that are non-ethical was made forcibly by Hume in a celebrated passage. 'In every system of morality,' he says, ' . . . I have always remarked, that the author proceeds for some time in the ordinary way of reasoning, and establishes the being of a God, or makes observations concerning human affairs; when of a sudden I am surprised to find, that instead of the usual copulations of propositions, *is*, and *is not*, I meet with no proposition that is not connected with an *ought*, or an *ought not*. . . . As this *ought*, or *ought not* expresses some new relation or affirmation, it is necessary that it should be explained; and at the same time that a reason should be given . . . how this new relation can be a deduction from others, which are entirely different from it.' Hume concludes from these observations that they would 'subvert all the vulgar systems of morality, and let us see, that the distinction of vice and virtue is not . . . perceived by reason.'

Let us consider briefly at which point in Locke's argument moral assertions are introduced. They appear in two contexts. One is where Locke advances his proof of God's existence and the 'voluntarist' theory (or rather definition) that law or men's duties are the expression of a superior will. For Locke then moral obligations are binding because they arise from God's commands. Now from saying that God commands us to do certain actions we cannot infer that we ought to do them, not even if we add the further premise that God commands us to obey His commands. The ethical statement concerning our duty to do certain actions can be derived only from another ethical statement such as that we ought to do what God commands. For Locke such a derivation is in fact possible since he argues that obedience to God's will is right, that is, obligatory. However any deduction from this premise or first moral principle, i.e. that a creature ought to obey the wish of his Creator, may be said to be compelling only if the premise is self-evident, which is doubtful in Locke's example, for it would not be self-contradictory to reject the principle that obedience to God's will is right. Moreover, the 'voluntarist' theory carries with it an implication which Locke obviously found dissatisfying, for together with the concept of will it introduces an arbitrary element into morality.

In order to make his theory more perfect, Locke attempts to derive moral obligation in some other way. He does this as part of his endeavour to arrive at a purely rational foundation of ethics. For

him human reason not only indicates or teaches what man's duties are, but at the same time makes his duties binding; it is thus a self-dependent source of obligation. He maintains that natural law is coeval with the human race and that all men are subject to it since it is 'so firmly rooted in the soil of human nature.' In his view there is in fact a 'harmony' or 'conformity' (*convenientia*) between moral values and man's rational nature; for as man's nature is always the same so reason 'pronounces' a fixed and permanent rule of morals. One may wonder how from these views Locke can arrive at a theory of moral obligation. To derive natural law from man's rational nature, and this, in its turn, from God's wisdom in creating man such that certain duties follow from his constitution is to draw an ethical conclusion from entirely non-ethical premises. Therefore the same objection applies here as in connexion with the 'voluntarist' theory of law. To put the point differently one might say that reason can perhaps declare what type of action is in accordance with man's nature and is therefore in *some* sense necessary; but it does not thereby prove a moral obligation to perform the action. Grotius, Locke's contemporary, admitted that natural law, if defined as a dictate of right reason only *indicates* whether or not an action is morally necessary, and before him Suarez had pointed out that in this capacity it would be of the nature of a *directive* rule rather than of a law in the strict sense, a law having a binding force.

But this difficulty, Locke would argue, can be overcome by establishing a close analogy between moral knowledge and mathematics. The step he proposes now is a further example of a doubtful, if not illegitimate, passage from one kind of discourse to another. For from assertions about moral rules he passes to the assertion that the validity of these rules can be proved, and even shown to be necessary in the same way as a geometrical demonstration.

Locke advances his new argument in connexion with his notion of a harmony between natural law and man's rational nature. Thus he says: 'In fact it seems to me to follow just as necessarily from the nature of man that, if he is a man, he is bound to love and worship God and also to fulfil other things appropriate to the rational nature, i.e. to observe the law of nature, as it follows from the nature of a triangle that, if it is a triangle, its three angles are equal to two right angles.' By analogy with mathematical necessity Locke here endeavours to establish the *necessary* validity of moral rules. It is not altogether clear, however, whether in this passage he thinks of moral truths as self-evident principles or as deductions from self-evident principles. From another passage where he wants to make clear that man's duties necessarily follow from his very nature it might appear that he regards moral truths as self-evident; for he compares the way in which these are apprehended to the way in which men, so long as

they can see and the sun shines, must of necessity come to know the alternations of day and night and the differences between colours and between a curved and a straight line. The point he seems anxious to make in both passages is that from the concept of man's nature, if suitably defined, propositions concerning moral obligation would follow either analytically or by the rules of deductive inference, just as in mathematics, granting certain definitions, we accept some propositions as self-evident and others as demonstrable.

Here, in the setting of his early doctrine of natural law, we meet with the first example of Locke's celebrated contention that mathematics and morality are parallel in that they both contain self-evident truths and are capable of demonstration. Several of his contemporaries, e.g. Grotius, and also certain British moralists following him, e.g. Samuel Clarke, held a similar view. They found this view attractive for two reasons: firstly, it presented an improvement on a legislative ethics which they regarded as unsatisfactory because of the element of arbitrariness it contains; secondly, the view of the demonstrability of ethics seemed to them to allow moral rules to be regarded as independent of a superior will and at the same time as necessarily valid, i.e. not merely directive but binding. Whatever advantages Locke may have hoped to derive from this view, it raises difficulties for his argument in the essays.

There are two alternatives to be considered. On the one hand, Locke may have been tempted to accept moral *definitions* as the starting-point of a demonstrative deduction of ethics; he did so, for instance, in his mature work, the *Essay* (IV. III. 18), where he derives the proposition that 'where there is no property there is no injustice' from preliminary definitions of property as a right to anything and of injustice as the violation of that right. Here he is confronted with the same problem as in the case of someone trying to draw an ethical conclusion from non-ethical premises; for to deduce an ethical proposition from definitions should be just as impossible. On the other hand, if Locke accepts *self-evident* moral truths as the first principles of his demonstrative science of ethics the only justification he has for this is his belief in the analogy between moral knowledge and mathematics, or vision respectively. It is far from obvious, however, that such a parallel can be accepted. All that Locke has shown is that there are self-evident principles in mathematics and that certain empirical propositions can in some sense be called self-evident. Without a demonstration of the truth of the analogy on which he relies he cannot claim to have indicated the existence of self-evident moral propositions, or, for that matter, of a demonstrative science of ethics. In fact, moral ideas and judgments are very different from those of mathematics, and moral obligation is a kind of necessity that differs from logical necessity as it does from causal necessity. In other words,

any attempt to prove that a moral rule is binding is doomed to fail if it is considered to be the same as an attempt to prove that a geometrical demonstration is valid.

I conclude that, for the reasons I have given, Locke's theory of natural law is open to criticism; that because the difficulties which beset his theory are liable to be present in any philosophical defence of this law as a law of reason, no such defence can ever succeed. To say this is not to deny that natural law is acceptable as the basis of moral obligation if one regards it as a premise of thought which cannot be further justified by reason, i.e. as an article of faith, or an ideal. But this would be a very different issue from that which I have discussed in this paper, and because it is not primarily a philosophical problem, I do not propose to go into it further. It should be remembered, however, that Locke himself, in his later years, came to regard the idea of a law of nature as a mere premise of his thought, and that he must have perceived certain theoretical difficulties in this notion, for he could never bring himself to publish his own doctrine in the essays.

Here then is a summary of what I have tried to say in this paper. First I outlined the development of the idea of natural law from antiquity to modern times. Then I gave a brief account of what Locke says about natural law in his *Treatise of Government* and showed that as a rational law it is of fundamental importance for his political and moral philosophy. However, we find the most detailed account of his doctrine of natural law in recently discovered essays, the work of his youth, and it is because there he enters so fully into the particulars of this law that it is possible for us to subject his theory to a close examination and to point out exactly where the weaknesses lie. We saw that the chief difficulty arises from an ambiguity in the central notion, that of reason. I explained that this ambiguity is liable to give rise to confusions in any theory of natural law to the extent that such a theory represents an attempt to justify rationally the moral law as a law of reason. Such a process of justification would be in the form of a logical deduction; but since the main term, that of reason, would be employed in different senses, there are bound to occur illegitimate inferences from one *kind* of discourse to another. The inferences in Locke's argument are from factual statements concerning reason to definitions concerning reason; thence to statements about discoveries made by reason, from which certain ethical statements concerning the binding force of rational principles are derived; these statements, in their turn, are thought to be like statements in mathematics, i.e. capable of logical proof, an analogy which obscures the distinction between moral and logical necessity.

[The following is Locke's *Journal* entry for 15 July, 1678 (Bodleian)

MS. Locke f.3, pp. 201-2), headed *Lex naturae*. The chronological context in which it falls is discussed in my edition of Locke's essays on natural law, pp. 66-7; the moral doctrine of which it forms a part is to my mind best explained by H. Sidgwick in his *Outlines of the History of Ethics*, 6th ed., 1946, pp. 175-8. I have modernized the spelling and punctuation of the passage, published here for the first time.

'God having given man *above other creatures of this habitable part of the universe* a knowledge of himself which the beasts have not, he is thereby under obligations, which the beasts are not, for knowing God to be a wise agent; he cannot but conclude that he has that knowledge and those faculties which he finds in himself above the other creatures given him for some use and end. If therefore he comprehends the relation between father and son and finds it reasonable that his son whom he has begot (only in pursuance of his pleasure without thinking of his son) and nourished should obey, love, and reverence him and be grateful to him, he cannot but find it much more reasonable that he and every other man should obey and revere, love and thank the author of their being to whom they owe all that they are. If he finds it reasonable to punish one of his children that injures another, he cannot but expect the same from God the Father of all men, when any one injures another; if he finds it reasonable that his children should assist and help one another and expects it from them as their duty, will he not also by the same reason conclude that God expects the same of all men one to another? If he finds that God has made him and all other men in a state wherein they cannot subsist without society and has given them judgement to discern what is capable of preserving that society, can he but conclude that he is obliged and that God requires him to follow those rules which conduce to the preserving of society?']

*University of Durham.*

## HEGEL'S "SCIENCE" AND WHITEHEAD'S "MODERN WORLD"

ROBERT C. WHITTEMORE

"I have never been able to read Hegel: I initiated my attempt by studying some remarks of his on mathematics which struck me as complete nonsense. It was foolish of me, but I am not writing to explain my good sense."—A. N. Whitehead.<sup>1</sup>

As a living metaphysician Hegel has been a long time dead.<sup>2</sup> His "system," to all appearances, lives on only in the histories of philosophy. The thinkers of the twentieth century have, virtually without exception, come to regard the *Science of Logic* as a purely abstract spinning out of arbitrary and very bloodless categories, and the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences* is usually taken as being simply a more concise and comprehensive sample of the same. The *Phenomenology* survives—to be interpreted as an essay in existentialism.<sup>3</sup>

Is such an attitude "foolish"? I propose to argue that it is. And yet—it cannot be denied that there exist many good and apparent reasons why such an attitude should prevail. For one, hegelian rationalism is always assumed to be absolutely inconsistent with positivism or empiricism in any of its contemporary forms, and for better or worse these viewpoints dominate twentieth-century thought. Existentialists have, with some success, disputed the claim that the rational is the real, and most metaphysicians have found the concrete universal strangely evanescent. Hegel's pretentiousness has alienated many. And surely there is in all the literature of philosophy no author more turgid or obscure.

No interpreter of Hegel can afford to overlook these objections, but this does not mean that they are necessarily cause for dismay. Such decisiveness and formidability as they possess is due in no small part to the failure of anti-hegelians to look more closely to the epistemological and ontological presuppositions underlying their objections. Empiricists, existentialists, and scholastically oriented metaphysicians are alike at fault in their habitual tendency to take as final truth and misinterpret that sense-experience which others

<sup>1</sup> *Essays in Science and Philosophy* (New York, Philosophical Library, 1948), p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> This is, of course, not true as regards his status as a social and political philosopher. In these realms he is, if anything, too alive!

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Richard Kroner's Introduction to Hegel's *Early Theological Writings* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1948). J. Loewenberg suggests a similar interpretation in his Introduction to *Hegel Selections* (New York, Scribner's, 1929).

before Hegel have exposed as questionable. Obscurity and turgidity are lamentable traits, but even so they need not imply the error or triviality of that which they characterize. Pretentiousness is not local to rationalist philosophies. The significance of the hegelian philosophy for the modern world should not and does not depend upon its ability to reconcile its viewpoint with that of more popular philosophies, or upon its success in explaining away the literary and psychological shortcomings of its author.

If the philosophy of Hegel has importance in our day, be it no more than as a prolegomena to one main current of contemporary cosmology, it is because this system accords much more closely with present-day cosmological theory than has hitherto been generally supposed: it is because this method, this dialectic, approaches to an adequate description of and affords a significant insight into the operations of the universe as hypothesized by the science of our time.

I am keenly aware that such claims, assuming that they can be established, involve a somewhat radical reinterpretation of the hegelian system as usually envisaged. I believe, however, that such a reinterpretation can be justified, if for no other reason than because I am convinced that what is involved is not really a reinterpretation at all, but rather an overdue placing of the system of Hegel in its proper historical perspective. For this philosophy is not what so many have made it out to be, *i.e.* a study in the dialectic of rationalistic abstraction. It is rather an essay in cosmology; it is, to use Hegel's own phrase, a "Speculative Logic" containing "all previous Logic and Metaphysics," and as such it constitutes, so I shall argue, an enduring contribution to that type of cosmological thinking whose prime contemporary exemplification is Whitehead's *Process and Reality*.<sup>1</sup>

That such is really the case can best be illustrated by examining the basic tenets and presuppositions of the hegelian philosophy in the light of the contemporary development. Thus our first task in what follows will be to show how at virtually every significant point the system of Hegel is not only in accord with the cosmological scheme envisaged by contemporary process philosophy, but in some instances constitutes an actual improvement on that scheme. This accomplished, we should then be in a position to reappraise the value and importance of Hegel's "science" for the modern world.

<sup>1</sup> That Hegel's philosophy does possess affinities with modern science is, of course, not my discovery. The idea is to be found in the form of scattered hints throughout the various works of R. G. Collingwood, and Professor E. E. Harris has discussed it at some length in his recent *Nature, Mind and Modern Science* (New York, Macmillan, 1954). However, the specific affinities between Hegel and Whitehead have never, to the best of my knowledge, been explored in any detail.

## II

In his Preface to *Process and Reality*, Whitehead cites nine "prevailing habits of thought" which, he thinks, must be "repudiated in so far as concerns their influence on philosophy."<sup>1</sup> Two implications of this list command our attention: (1) the repudiation of all nine "habits" appears in complete accord with the philosophical presuppositions<sup>2</sup> underlying the modern scientific outlook. Thus—as might be expected; (2) the philosophy of Hegel is in complete agreement with that of Whitehead as concerns the repudiation of *all* of these "habits."

This second statement requires some justification. I do not think that many will quarrel with the assertion as concerns "habits" i, iii, iv, v, vi, and vii (see footnote 2). Hegel would scarcely be Hegel did he "distrust" speculation. Few thinkers are less governed by the "faculty-psychology" than he. One has only to reflect upon the root meaning of the Hegelian dialectic to notice its incompatibility with the "subject-predicate form of expression," and with the conception of "vacuous actuality." The refutation of the "sensationalist doctrine of perception" is the first order of business in the *Phenomenology*, and Hegel's strictures against Kantian Idealism are too well known to require repeating here. But the case is not so obvious as regards "habits" ii, viii, and ix. The *Logic* is generally

<sup>1</sup> *Process and Reality* (New York, Social Science Book Store, 1941), p. viii. The nine "habits" repudiated are (i) "The distrust of speculative philosophy"; (ii) "The trust in language as an adequate expression of propositions"; (iii) "The mode of philosophical thought which implies, and is implied by, the faculty-psychology"; (iv) "The subject-predicate form of expression"; (v) "The sensationalist doctrine of perception"; (vi) "The doctrine of vacuous actuality"; (vii) "The Kantian doctrine of the objective world as a theoretical construct from purely subjective experience"; (viii) "Arbitrary deductions in *ex absurdo* arguments"; (ix) "Belief that logical inconsistencies can indicate anything else than some antecedent errors."

<sup>2</sup> According to Professor Errol Harris, "The philosophical theory demanded by the modern outlook must . . . maintain five main theses: (i) that mind is immanent in all things; (ii) that reality is a whole, self-sufficient and self-maintaining, and that coherence is the test of truth of any theory about it; (iii) that the subject and object of knowledge are ultimately one—the same thing viewed from opposite (and mutually complementary) standpoints; (iv) that events and phenomena can adequately be explained only teleologically, and (v) that the ultimate principle of interpretation is, in consequence, the principle of value." *Nature, Mind and Modern Science*, p. 206. "That Hegel's theory embodies the five principles . . . as characteristic of the modern conception of nature needs," he remarks somewhat later (p. 229), "no argument. The reader may even suspect that I have derived them from Hegel and then transplanted them into the modern context."

With the addition that the test of truth is not simply coherence, but coherence plus correspondence (this, in order to insure adequate representation of the empirical element), I would agree completely with Professor Harris.

conceived to be the apotheosis of a linguistic *tour de force*—even by some hegelians. Moreover, who is a greater sinner than Hegel when it comes to "arbitrary deductions"? And can the hegelian system survive the exposure of "logical inconsistencies"?

If we concern ourselves solely with the adequacies of language as a tool for the description of simple sense-experiences, then Hegel's repudiation of "habit ii" seems plainly indicated in the conclusion to the section on sense-certainty in the *Phenomenology*.<sup>1</sup> For "... the This of sense, which is 'meant,' cannot," he there remarks, "be reached by language, which belongs to consciousness, i.e. to what is inherently universal." But, you may object, if language is the vehicle of the universal, then must it not always be adequate to that universal? The purposes of the dialectic as exemplified in the *Science of Logic* and in the Logic of the *Encyclopedia* would appear to require some such assumption—at least as far as the elucidation and deduction of the categories is concerned. However, as G. R. G. Mure<sup>2</sup> and Morris Cohen<sup>3</sup> have pointed out, if we take account of the difference in the list of categories as presented in the *Science of Logic* and as given in the Logic of the *Encyclopedia*, it would seem that Hegel did not regard even this "habit" as unbreakable.

As to whether or not Hegel is guilty of "habit viii" (arbitrary deductions in *ex absurdo* arguments), this depends almost entirely upon what patterns of thought Whitehead here has reference to. If Whitehead is referring to scholastic modes of argumentation, and I suspect that he is, then the question is scarcely relevant to Hegel, who, moreover, hardly ever employs the *ex absurdo* form of argument. On the other hand, if the charge be confined to that of making arbitrary deductions then Hegel is surely guilty. Whatever excuse can be offered for him on this point will depend upon whether he is also committed to "habit ix." I think that he is not, and this for the same reason as has been advanced for acquitting him of "habit ii," i.e. the differences between the categories as envisaged in the *Science of Logic* and as presented in the Logic of the *Encyclopedia* tend to support the view that Hegel regarded the system of categories as somewhat flexible, and if this is true, then far from being guilty of "habit ix" he might cite his repudiation of it as his defence with regard to "habit viii"!

So much by way of justification. Such further evidence for the conclusion that Hegel and Whitehead are in agreement as concerns

<sup>1</sup> *The Phenomenology of Mind*, translated by J. B. Baillie (New York, Macmillan, 1949), 2nd revised edition, p. 159.

<sup>2</sup> A detailed discussion of the corrigibility of the categories is to be found in Mure's *A Study of Hegel's Logic* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1950), pp. 323–9, 355, 366.

<sup>3</sup> Cohen, Morris, "Hegel's Rationalism," *Philosophical Review*, Vol. 41 (1932), p. 286.

a mutual repudiation of these nine "habits" should become clear in the sequel. Of course, such agreement, in itself, is a minor matter. However, taken in conjunction with our other conclusion, i.e. that the philosophic presuppositions underlying the repudiation of these "habits" are the same as those underlying the modern scientific outlook, it acquires somewhat greater importance, since it points to a connection, as yet vague and ill-defined, between the philosophy of Hegel and the contemporary view. Its real significance, however, emerges when we consider the establishment of this affinity in the repudiation of philosophic habits in the light of a prolegomena to an affinity of a much wider cosmological significance, the affinity, that is, between the hegelian conception of "dialectic" and Whitehead's envisagement of "process."

## III

There exists a prevalent misconception, in part derived from Plato and the Scholastic logicians, in part stemming from Hegel's insistence upon investing old terms with new meanings, in part due to the dictionary, that "dialectic," because of its character as a logical principle, is abstraction—and nothing more. It matters not that the whole of the hegelian production constitutes a flat repudiation of this misconception. It persists, and undoubtedly will continue to do so for so long as the conviction prevails that the logical as such is alien to the temporal, that there can be no logic in process or of process. That a logic of process is possible, that logic itself involves "becoming" as a character is, I would argue, a central theme not only of the *Phenomenology* and the *Science of Logic*, but of *Process and Reality* as well. And while we cannot here undertake to recapitulate the cases therein made, we can indicate the parallelism of Hegel's and Whitehead's conclusions, and note their importance for one another. For in the last analysis, the explanation of the logical character of becoming is the explanation of the synonymy of "process" and "dialectic."

This synonymy is implicit in the definitions of the terms themselves. "Process," remarks Whitehead, "is the stage in which the creative idea works towards the definition and attainment of a determinate individuality. Process is the growth and attainment of a final end."<sup>1</sup> "Process is the becoming of experience."<sup>2</sup> It is, I think, significant that not only is the rational element fundamental to the definition (note the reference to the "creative idea" and to the growth of ends) but that this "creative idea," this "growth" can, in this context, only be expressed in terms of dialectic—in the hegelian

<sup>1</sup> *Process and Reality*, p. 227. My italics.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 252.

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sense of the word. The relevant correlative passage is to be found in the *Philosophy of Right*:

The concept's moving principle, which alike engenders and dissolves the particularizations of the universal, I call dialectic, though I do not mean that dialectic which takes an object, proposition, etc., given to feeling or, in general, to immediate consciousness, and explains it away, confuses it, pursues it this way and that, and has as its sole task the deduction of the contrary of that with which it starts—a negative type of dialectic commonly appearing even in Plato. . . . The loftier dialectic of the concept consists not simply in producing the determination as a contrary and a restriction, but in producing and seizing upon the positive content and outcome of the determination, because it is this which makes it solely a development and an immanent progress. Moreover, *this dialectic is not an activity of subjective thinking applied to some matter externally but is rather the matter's very soul putting forth its branches and fruit organically*. This development of the Idea is the proper activity of its rationality, and thinking, as something subjective, merely looks on it without for its part adding to it any ingredient of its own. To consider a thing rationally means not to bring reason to bear on the object from the outside and so to tamper with it, but to find that the object is rational on its own account; here it is mind in its freedom, the culmination of self-conscious reason, *which gives itself actuality and engenders itself as an existing world*. The sole task of philosophic science is to bring into consciousness this proper work of the reason of the thing itself.<sup>1</sup>

One quotation does not establish a doctrine, although no other passage seems to me to express so completely the whole of Hegel's aim and meaning. But surely the implication is here plain enough that process is as much presupposed by this definition of Hegel's as reason was in the (above-mentioned) Whiteheadian definition of process. Hegel's employment of such phrases as "moving-principle" and "immanent progress," his usage of such words as "soul," "engender," "organic"—these alone should suffice to convince the existentially-minded that dialectic—at least as Hegel conceives it—is not simply a shuffle of abstractions.

But at this point we must take account of an objection which, on the surface, looks decisive. The objection, namely, that while this Hegelian conception of dialectic may well imply process, that while Hegel may at times even use this particular term to describe transition,<sup>2</sup> this implication and this usage is not the same as that of Whitehead, and should not be identified with it. For Hegel is speaking of a category, and Whitehead has reference to an act. Hegel is simply developing the implications of an idea, whereas Whitehead is attempting a description of an existential fact.

There are two replies that might be made to this. The first and more traditional one being that here, as usual in Hegel criticism, the

<sup>1</sup> *The Philosophy of Right*, translated by T. M. Knox (Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1942), pp. 34–5. My italics.

<sup>2</sup> *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 157 f.

objector is indulging himself in the rather arbitrary assumption that the categories are pure abstractions, the "other" to concrete existents, whereas, in fact, it is ever Hegel's intention to argue that thought and thing, idea and existent, are in truth but moments each of the other, and as such inseparable.

Such a reply will not, of course, satisfy either empiricist or existentialist, and it is perhaps right that it should not do so, since in a way it begs the question, *i.e.* as to just how the gap between the empirical and the ideal is to be bridged. Put in this way, the objection constitutes the central problem of all cosmology, and thus any reply to it will, of necessity, take the form of an exposition and defence of that cosmological scheme which Hegel has devised to bridge the gap. For only from this (cosmological) perspective is it possible to see that process (as conceived by Whitehead) and the Hegelian dialectic stand in any relation at all.

In its most general form this cosmological scheme comprises the entire development of the basic triad, Idea-Nature-Spirit as set forth in the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*. In its more specifically cosmological form it constitutes the Philosophy of Nature, and it is mainly with this latter that we have here to do. In the famous last paragraph of the Logic of the *Encyclopedia* Hegel records how the Philosophy of Nature begins with the resolution of the Absolute Idea "to let the 'moment' of its particularity, or of the first characterization and other-being, the immediate idea, as its reflected image, go forth freely as Nature."<sup>1</sup> "We began," he adds, "with Being: where we now are we also have the Idea as Being; but this Idea which has Being is Nature."<sup>2</sup> The same conception, somewhat more fully expressed, is to be found at the close of the *Science of Logic*:

For the Idea posits itself as the absolute unity of the pure Notion and its Reality, and thus gathers itself into the immediacy of Being; and in doing so, as totality in this form, it is *Nature*.—But this determination is not a perfected becoming or a *transition*. . . . Rather, the pure Idea, in which the determinateness or reality of the Notion is itself raised to the level of Notion, is an absolute *liberation*, having no further immediate determination which is not equally *posited* and equally Notion. Consequently there is no translation in this freedom; the simple Being as which the Idea has determined itself, remains perfectly transparent to it, and is the Notion which in its determination stands fast by itself. The transition here therefore must rather be taken to mean that the Idea freely releases itself in absolute self-security and self-repose. By reason of this freedom the form of its determinateness also is utterly free—the externality of space and time which is absolutely for itself and without subjectivity.—In so far as this externality is only in accordance with the abstract immediacy of Being, and is comprehended by consciousness,

<sup>1</sup> *The Logic of Hegel*, translated from *The Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences* by William Wallace (Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1892), 2nd edition, section 244, p. 379.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

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it exists as mere objectivity and external life; but in the Idea it remains, in and for itself, the totality of the Notion, and Philosophy related to Nature as divine knowledge."<sup>1</sup>

In these two very obscure statements lies the whole crux of the matter, the positing of the unity-in-difference of the empirical and the Ideal.

They have been variously interpreted. Alexander has stressed the notion of "process."<sup>2</sup> Errol Harris sees in them, the outlines of the story of the self-evolution of mind in nature.<sup>3</sup> Collingwood delineates the meaning of "externality."<sup>4</sup> But in all interpretations the implica-

<sup>1</sup> *The Science of Logic*, Vol. 2, translated by W. H. Johnson and L. G. Struthers (New York, Macmillan, 1951), pp. 485-6.

<sup>2</sup> Alexander, Samuel, "Hegel's Conception of Nature," *Mind*, Vol. II (1886), p. 499. "The logical Idea is the whole world of natural and intelligible things in its abstract form, but it is no mere reposeful conception: it is a process, the process of dialectic. It is not merely a process for us, with our habits of learning, but in itself a process, and therefore, like the Platonic dialectic after which it is named, identical with its method."

<sup>3</sup> Harris, Errol E., "The Philosophy of Nature in Hegel's System," *The Review of Metaphysics*, Vol. 3 (1949), pp. 224-5. "The mind first sees itself as the world come to consciousness and then sees the world as the process in and by means of which that coming to consciousness is brought about. Having found its own identity with the world in knowledge, mind goes back to the world as Nature to view it as the process in and through which knowledge comes to be, and which, at the same time, comes to be the object (or content) of knowledge. As the process is throughout one of growing self-consciousness, it is a process at once of the emergence of the knowing mind and of the world's (the process itself) becoming known. Mind, in short, discovers its own immanent presence in nature. . . . The much disputed transition from the Logic to the Philosophy of Nature is, therefore, simply the passage from one stage to the next in the development of self-consciousness. Mind comes to know itself even more fully and completely, and in the higher stages of the development it is constantly turning back upon itself, making itself in the prior phase its object. It makes itself, as knowledge, its own object in logic: it makes itself, as object identical with subject, as mind immanent in the 'external world' (the conception which forms the consummation of the Logic) its own object in Nature-philosophy; and it makes itself, as the emergent from Nature, its own object in the Philosophy of Spirit."

<sup>4</sup> "... what is the differentia of nature, the peculiarity which distinguishes it as a whole from the Idea on the one hand and from Mind on the other? Hegel's answer is that nature is essentially reality as external, the external world. Here external does not mean external to us. . . . What is meant by calling nature the external world is that it is a world pervaded and characterized by externality, a world in which everything is external to everything else. Nature, then, is the realm of outwardness; it is a world (or rather *the world*) in which things are outside each other. This outwardness has two forms: one in which everything is outside every other thing, namely, space; the other in which one thing is outside itself, namely, time. The idea of nature, according to Hegel, is the idea of a reality thus doubly broken up, spread out or distributed in space and time." Collingwood, R. G., *The Idea of Nature* (Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1945), pp. 126-7.

tion is clear: Nature is Mind externalized, the appearance of Mind, which is at once no mere appearance and yet not full reality. The empirical is the ideal in its otherness,<sup>1</sup> and however real we take this otherness or externality to be, the destiny of Nature is to be transcended and transmuted in Spirit.<sup>2</sup>

The fact is that in the Idea of Life the self-externalization of nature is implicitly at an end; subjectivity is the very substance and conception of life—with this proviso, however, that its existence or objectivity is still at the same time forfeited to the sway of self-externalism. . . . Mind is the existent truth of matter—the truth that matter itself has no truth.<sup>3</sup>

Has Hegel then explained Nature by explaining it away? This is a charge that has often been made, and if you presuppose that the denial that Nature is something in and for itself is equivalent to denying Nature then perhaps Hegel is guilty. For it is plain that he does not consider Nature to be simply a matrix or receptacle, into which at the appropriate moment of creation Mind is infused. To conceive nature in such fashion is hardly to overcome dualism. But if not a matrix, what then? At this point we can, I think, appeal with profit to a definition of Whitehead's. In *Science and the Modern World*<sup>4</sup> Whitehead defines nature as "a structure of evolving processes." "The reality," he adds, "is the process." When we compare this with our previously noted description of dialectic as the "concept's moving principle . . . the matter's very soul putting forth its branches and fruit organically," the result is, I suggest, the discovery of a synonym. For what else is dialectic if not a "structure of evolving processes"? It will be said that the two are not really synonymous since "dialectic" as here employed encompasses logical and physical process, whereas Whitehead has reference to physical process alone.<sup>5</sup> But are logical and physical process separable in essence or in act—for either Hegel or Whitehead? According to Hegel, logical process is the presupposition of physical process.

<sup>1</sup> "In nature . . . mind actualizes itself only as its own other, as mind asleep." Hegel, G. W. F., *The Philosophy of Right*, p. 279.

<sup>2</sup> "But this next resolution of the pure Idea—to determine itself as external Idea—thereby only posits for itself the mediation out of which the Notion arises as free existence that out of externality has passed into itself; arises to perfect its self-liberation in the *Philosophy of Spirit*, and to discover the highest Notion of itself in that logical science as the pure Notion which forms a Notion of itself." *The Science of Logic*, Vol. II, p. 486.

<sup>3</sup> Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind* (translated from the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences* by William Wallace). Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1894, section 389, p. 13.

<sup>4</sup> *Science and the Modern World* (New York, Macmillan, 1948, p. 106).

<sup>5</sup> I pass by for the moment the collateral objection suggested by Hegel's denial of natural (temporal) evolution that there can be no synonymy, since, on Hegel's view, time is not, to use Whitehead's phrase, "taken seriously." But on this topic, more below.

Dialectic is the "moving principle" alike characterizing thought and thing. The universal is the truth of the particular.

Actuality is always the unity of universal and particular, the universal dismembered in the particulars which seem to be self-subsistent, although they really are upheld and contained only in the whole. Where this unity is not present, a thing is not actual even though it may have acquired existence.<sup>1</sup>

According to Whitehead,

every so-called "universal" is particular in the sense of being just what it is, diverse from everything else; and every so-called "particular" is universal in the sense of entering into the constitutions of other actual entities.<sup>2</sup> The organic philosophy does not hold that the "particular existents" are prehended apart from universals; on the contrary, it holds that they areprehended by the mediation of universals.<sup>3</sup>

One has but to compare the two views in order to see that the latter is but a restatement in Realistic terms of the former, that the former is but an Idealistic interpretation of the latter, and that in neither is it possible to disjoin the Realistic and Idealistic moments. What difference there is—is no more than a matter of emphasis.

The same point of view, seen from a somewhat different perspective, finds expression as the Whiteheadian denial of "simple location," a denial whose analogue is to be found in the *Phenomenology*<sup>4</sup> as the denial of the immediacy of the "here" and "now."

Finally, one has but to recall that process, as envisaged by both Whitehead and Hegel, is always teleological in order to see the arbitrariness of the empiricist assumption that universal and particular, the logical and the physical, can be in these systems meaningfully disjoined—even in abstraction.

The affinity between the systems of Whitehead and Hegel becomes most marked when we turn to the conception of that which secures the unity and direction of the process and its structure. As it is with Whitehead, so also is it with Hegel that God (Spirit, Mind, Absolute) is the chief exemplification of those metaphysical principles on which the hegelian cosmology rests.

*The Absolute is Mind (Spirit)*—this is the supreme definition of the Absolute. To find this definition and to grasp its meaning and burthen was, we may say, the ultimate purpose of all education and all philosophy: it was the point to which turned the impulse of all religion and science: and it is this impulse that must explain the history of the world.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Philosophy of Right*, p. 283.

<sup>2</sup> *Process and Reality*, p. 76.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 230.

<sup>4</sup> *Phenomenology of Mind*, pp. 151–60.

<sup>5</sup> *Philosophy of Mind*, paragraph 384, p. 7.

"The Absolute is Mind." As substance become subject,<sup>1</sup> as eternal essence before the creation of Nature and of a Finite Spirit,<sup>2</sup> God (the Absolute, Spirit, Mind) is the pure creative concept prior to all physical process, is, following Whitehead's expression, "primordial." As the Truth of the realm of Nature, whose dialectic is the manner of Mind's coming to self-consciousness, whose process is the unfolding of the Absolute as the physical world, God is, following Whitehead's expression, "superjective." As that which as Spirit is its own content of consciousness, that in which all finite moments are sublated and transcended (aufgehoben), as Mediator, God is, following Whitehead's expression, "consequent." Following the analogy of the Trinity, a conception to which Hegel frequently recurs, God as Absolute Idea (Logic) is pictorialized as God the Father; as drenched into otherness (Nature) God becomes God the Son; as reunited unity of self and other, God is God the Holy Ghost. This characterization is mirrored in the Whiteheadian system in the conception of God as primordial (Father), as consequent (Son), as superjective (Holy Ghost).

Both systems are thus—panentheisms,<sup>3</sup> since for both God is at once the Reality, of which the universe in process is an appearance, and the self-creative source of that Reality. Thus from the standpoint of theology the explanation of the cogency of the hegelian cosmology for the present age becomes the explanation of how this system fares in comparison with such other contemporary expressions of panentheism as, for example, those of Berdyaev, Hartshorne, Buber, Iqbal, Radhakrishnan, and, of course, Whitehead. Within the scope of this paper it is, of course, impossible to enter into any detailed comparisons. The comparative systems, in any case, speak for themselves. Nonetheless, some general evaluation of the hegelian position *vis-à-vis* the contemporary view is essential, if only because of the existence of several significant differences (which we have now deliberately passed over) between the hegelian cosmology and its twentieth-century counterparts. It is to the consideration of these differences, and to the objections arising out of them, that we must now turn.

#### IV

There are, as I see it, three fundamental objections to the hegelian view as presented above. The first of these, the objection that the

<sup>1</sup> "In my view—a view which the developed exposition of the system itself can alone justify—everything depends on grasping and expressing the ultimate truth not as Substance but as Subject as well." *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 80.

<sup>2</sup> *Science of Logic*, Vol. I, Introduction, p. 60.

<sup>3</sup> Panentheism, and not pantheism, since this latter view is, on Hegel's view, properly descriptive only of those systems for which God qua Substance of the universe has failed to achieve individuality as Subject.

system fails to bridge the gap between empirical and ideal, we have already encountered. Whether or not in the argument of the past several pages, *i.e.* the argument that there is, in fact, no gap, you judge this objection to have been fairly disposed of will depend on your assessment of the system as a working cosmological hypothesis. This, in turn, will, to some degree, depend upon the ability of the system to meet the two objections yet to be raised. However, we can at this point consider what is implied in the idea of a "working cosmological hypothesis."

The first, and probably the most important, factor is that it is only and precisely this—a *hypothesis*. Which means, for all practical purposes, that the basic test of satisfactoriness will be the success of the system in meeting the twin criteria for minimal adequacy, namely, logical coherence and conformity to the data of experience. In other words, the system must renounce any claim to the possession of *final* truth, must be, in truth, an "open system."<sup>1</sup>

Is Hegel's system then an "open system"? "Precisely the opposite," is the usual reply. But here again, I suggest, the usual reply is wrong. The evidence is not massive, but there are indications throughout Hegel's work that he did not claim what many have rather absurdly held him to claim, *i.e.* that philosophy ends with Hegel. "Whatever happens," he remarks in his last book,

every individual is a child of his time; so philosophy too is its own time apprehended in thoughts. It is just as absurd to fancy that a philosophy can transcend its contemporary world as it is to fancy that an individual can overleap his own age. . . . If his theory really goes beyond the world as it is and builds an ideal one as it ought to be, that world exists indeed, but only in his opinions, an unsubstantial element where anything you please may, in fancy, be built.<sup>2</sup>

Philosophy, for Hegel as for anyone else, draws and must in future continue to draw its material from empirical observation and research. One has but to read them in order to see that at every stage in his philosophies of Nature, Spirit, and History, Hegel has deliberately and with full consciousness of its importance used the results of empirical inquiry. This is plain enough. But the important point in all this is that by so doing Hegel has nowhere succeeded in completely sublating this empirical element. At every stage of the

<sup>1</sup> Since many thinkers would hold the phrase "open system" to signify a contradiction in terms, it is best that we lose no time in defining what we mean by it. By "open system" I mean, and I understand such exponents of the open system as Alexander and Whitehead to have meant, that system which (1) contains within its categorial scheme provision for the modification or transcending of that scheme or any part of it. For example, Whitehead's view of natural law as subject to the vagaries of process; (2) allows for integration of the data of the future—considered as future. For example, Alexander's conception of God as in the making.

<sup>2</sup> *Philosophy of Right*, p. 11.

dialectic (in Logic, Nature, and Spirit) we are left with what G. R. G. Mure has called an "unsublated residue,"<sup>1</sup> and we are left with this for the simple reason that no philosophy, hegelian or otherwise, can ever sublate without residue the endless empirical flow. In God this flow may be absorbed, sublated, transcended—use what word you will. But for Hegel as for Whitehead, even God experiences the future as future. After growth *to* self-consciousness there remains forever future growth *in* self-consciousness. Logical and physical process alike must, on this view, eternally burst beyond the confines of an eternal present. "*Bis hier ist das Bewusstsein gekommen*," remarks Hegel at the close of his Philosophy of History. Consciousness has reached this far, but this cannot be the end:

For experience just consists in this, that the content—and the content is spirit—in its inherent nature is substance and so object of consciousness. But this substance, which is spirit, is the development of itself explicitly to what it is inherently and implicitly; and only as this process of reflecting itself into itself is it essentially and in truth spirit. It is inherently the movement which is the process of knowledge—the transforming of that inherent nature into explicitness, of Substance into Subject, of the object of consciousness into the object of self-consciousness, i.e. into an object that is at the same time transcended—in other words, into the notion. This transforming process is a cycle that returns into itself, a cycle that presupposes its beginning, and reaches its beginning only at the end.<sup>2</sup>

"The end is the beginning." With this conception Hegel apparently takes his place with those philosophers for whom the future is open and process is the measure of Reality. I say "apparently," because it is precisely at this point that the second fundamental objection to the hegelian view must be interposed and met. The objection, namely, that Hegel's denial of *natural* evolution is (1) utterly incompatible with the assertion of an "open system" in any form, and (2) utterly at variance with the evolutionistic presupposition common to all contemporary process philosophies. If this objection can be sustained, it would seem that we have no alternative but to concede that our enterprise is wrecked.

<sup>1</sup> "Hegel states clearly that the Philosophy of Nature depends for its material upon the results of natural science. 'Not only,' he writes in the *Philosophy of Nature* (section 246), 'must philosophy agree with the experience of Nature (*Natur-Erfahrung*), but natural science (*Physik*) is presupposed by and conditions philosophical science. . . .' The passage must, I think imply that although the Understanding and the *aperçus* of Nature which constitute its content are *Begriffsbestimmungen* on the ascending scale of Nature and Concrete Spirit, yet they are not sublated without residue in the dialectic of that scale, and so must appear as a *never ending* source of material for philosophy to reconstitute." *A Study of Hegel's Logic*, pp. 323-4. See also pp. 316, 329-68.

<sup>2</sup> "That is as far as consciousness has reached."

<sup>3</sup> *Phenomenology of Mind*, pp. 800-1.

Now that Hegel does reject the theory of *natural* evolution can hardly be denied. For Nature, he tells us in the *Encyclopedia*<sup>1</sup> is always

to be regarded as a system of grades, of which the one necessarily arises out of the other, and is the proximate truth of the one from which it results—but not so that the one were *naturally* generated out of the other. . . . It has been an inept conception of earlier and later "Naturphilosophie" to regard the progression and transition of one natural form and sphere into a higher as an outwardly actual production. . . . Thinking consideration must deny itself such nebulous, at bottom sensuous, conceptions, as in especial the so-called origin, for example, of plants and animals from water, and then the origin of the more highly developed animal organizations from the lower.

Does then such an expression as this—which in the light of contemporary biological and geological theory is clearly a mistake—mean that the hegelian cosmology has no value in the present age? It all depends, I suggest, on (1) what meaning you attach to the term "evolution," and (2) the role and status of evolution in modern cosmology. As regards the first, it is to be noted that Hegel is not rejecting evolution *per se*. On the contrary. *Logical* evolution, exemplified by the dialectic process, is the foundation of the entire hegelian system. What Hegel is arguing, and are we quite sure that he is wrong?, is that the admission of a doctrine of purely *natural* evolution is a mistake, if only because it so clearly implies that Nature is something in and for itself apart from Mind or Spirit. If we deny that Nature has a history, which history is the story of *natural* evolution, it is, so Hegel would contend, only because the sole history worthy of the designation "history" is the history of the self-evolution of God, the history of the process of the Absolute's attainment of consciousness of itself as Absolute. Evolution, therefore, on Hegel's view, is not rejected: it is transvalued. As transvalued, natural evolution is then to be regarded as sublated within logical evolution, and if this is so, then Hegel's denial of natural evolution is not at all the system-wrecking fact it first appeared to be. Of course, were Hegel acquainted with the scientific outlook of today, it is probable that rather than deny natural evolution he would choose to interpret it as an appearance (in the Bradleyan sense) of logical evolution. In any case, the significant point is that such a reinterpretation of natural evolution is entirely consonant with his basic position—as we have interpreted it.

If now, in this light, one turns to consider the status of evolution in modern cosmology, one finds, strangely enough, that this reinterpretation of natural evolution as the appearance of logical evolution is not only consonant with, but is apparently required by, any

<sup>1</sup> Section 249. Quoted by W. T. Stace, *The Philosophy of Hegel* (London, Macmillan, 1924), p. 313.

modern cosmology other than that of naïve realism. As Whitehead remarks in *Science and the Modern World*,

Nature exhibits itself as exemplifying a philosophy of the evolution of organisms subject to determinate conditions. Examples of such conditions are the dimensions of space, the laws of nature, the determinate enduring entities such as atoms, and electrons, which exemplify these laws. But the very nature of these entities, the very nature of their spatiality and temporality, should exhibit the arbitrariness of these conditions as the outcome of a wider evolution beyond nature itself, and within which nature is but a limited mode.<sup>1</sup>

And Collingwood notes that,

. . . this is a remarkable fact about modern cosmology, that the physical science of to-day has arrived at a view of matter and energy which so far agrees with the implications of Hegel's theory of nature, that a philosopher-scientist like Whitehead can restate Hegel's theory (not knowing that it is Hegel's, for he does not appear to have read Hegel, so far as I can judge) and allow that theory to take him wherever it likes, setting his sails to it with a good conscience and cheerfully resolving the concept of nature, as he says himself, into the concept of pure activity.<sup>2</sup>

However, there remains the third fundamental objection, and it is perhaps the most difficult of all, since it centres about and presupposes a theory of the nature of Time. The objection is simply this: When the hegelian theory speaks of process and dialectic, it speaks not of a process or dialectic in Time, but of a logical (eternal) progression of the Idea. As Alexander has remarked *vis-à-vis* Hegel's theory of Nature,

The theory of evolution is a theory of the history of nature, and whether it be true or false it is a series of events in time; but the hegelian development is an eternal process, which is present in its totality at any one moment of nature's existence.<sup>3</sup> Evolution is a history of how things in nature come to pass; dialectic is the process by which one idea logically leads on to the higher idea which is implicit in it and is its truth. Evolution is a history of a process in time; dialectic is a history of ideas which form a process not in time.<sup>4</sup>

In Whitehead's phrase, the objection is—that Hegel has failed to "take Time seriously."

But what is Time? The question would require a book to answer, and the definitive book has yet to be written. For Alexander, Time is (poetically) the Mind of Space; literally, as space-time, it constitutes the very matrix of Reality. Whitehead's view is even more obscure. Time, he insists,<sup>5</sup> is not to be thought of in the Newtonian

<sup>1</sup> *Science and the Modern World*, p. 135. My italics.

<sup>2</sup> *The Concept of Nature*, pp. 127-8.

<sup>3</sup> Alexander, Samuel, "Hegel's Conception of Nature," *Mind*, Vol. II (1886), p. 502.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 518.

<sup>5</sup> *The Concept of Nature* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1920), p. 65.

## HEGEL'S "SCIENCE"—WHITEHEAD'S "MODERN WORLD"

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sense as a real flowing container of facts. Rather is it always to be regarded as a character of the realization of the coming to be of every act of experience. A duration, Whitehead tells us,<sup>1</sup> is a spatialized epoch, is that which is required for the realization of any given event. Realization, he adds, is to be conceived of as the becoming of Time in the field of extension. Temporalization is realization, is atomic succession. Time is sheer succession of epochal durations,<sup>2</sup> is a character of the locus of that unison of becoming which is an actual entity.<sup>3</sup> Apart from its realization as a character qualifying the growth of entities, Time has no meaning whatever.

Now if these views of Alexander and Whitehead constitute taking Time seriously, and "taking Time seriously" be taken as implying that Time (or more properly, space-time) is something in and for itself, then it must be conceded that Hegel does not take Time seriously, since for him "Time is just the notion definitely existent, and presented to consciousness in the form of empty intuition."<sup>4</sup> "Time," he adds, "is the pure self in external form, apprehended in intuition, and not grasped and understood by the self, it is the notion apprehended only through intuition."<sup>5</sup> Or as it is put in the Philosophy of Nature, Time, dialectically emergent out of Space, is, together with Space, the primary character of Nature itself. Which is to say, that Time like that Nature which it characterizes is—appearance.<sup>6</sup> Time is the quality of that appearance of the Absolute which is Nature.

If, on the contrary, "taking Time seriously" does not imply that Time (or space-time) be taken as being something in and for itself, and Whitehead's rejection of the Newtonian conception would seem to indicate that for him at least Time is not so to be regarded, then it becomes an open question as to just what "taking Time seriously" does imply. As a minimum, we might say that it implies the essen-

<sup>1</sup> *Science and the Modern World*, p. 183.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Process and Reality*, pp. 195–6.

<sup>4</sup> *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 800.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> The hegelian conception here is, I think, close enough to that of Bradley to warrant quoting the latter as explanation of what is implied by the statement that "Time is appearance." "Time," Bradley remarks in *Appearance and Reality* (Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1951), p. 185, "is not real as such, and it proclaims its unreality by its inconsistent attempt to be an adjective of the timeless. It is an appearance which belongs to a higher character in which its special quality is merged. Its own temporal nature does not there cease wholly to exist but is thoroughly transmuted. It is counterbalanced, and, as such, lost within an all-inclusive harmony. The Absolute is timeless, but it possesses time as an isolated aspect, an aspect which, in ceasing to be isolated, loses its special character. It is there, but blended into a whole which we cannot realize."

tiality of Time as a character or an adjective of Reality. But if this is the case, then it is just possible that the hegelian view of Time might qualify, since to say that Time is an appearance, sublated in the Absolute, transcended and yet not lost, is to say that Time is, in some sense, real.<sup>1</sup> Time is appearance, but it is not *mere* appearance. Time, for itself, is nothing, yet it is not an illusion. Such a conception may to many seem to differ somewhat radically from those conceptions advanced by Whitehead and Alexander, but nonetheless, it represents a conception which at least stands as a live alternative for any teleologically centred modern cosmology.

And yet we must, I think, admit that this is no completely satisfactory solution. We must at this point keep always in mind that the cosmology of Hegel, however suggestive and significant we judge it to be, is, at best, a prolegomena to the contemporary views, and not a replacement for them. If our answers to the three basic objections have served no more than to give pause to those who would arbitrarily consign the system of Hegel to the cosmological scrapheap they have served their purpose.

## V

What then is the contemporary significance of Hegel? Sidney Hook finds it to be the fruitfulness of the hegelian method as a tool for social, political, and historical analysis.<sup>2</sup> Croce too has emphasized the merit of the method.<sup>3</sup> But both tend to deprecate the system as such, and therein, I think, lies their fault. For if any one thing should be clear by now, it is that method and system are absolutely undivorcable. This is implicit in the hegelian contention that we have not explained anything until we have explained everything. It is to be found throughout all of Hegel's work. The method is the presupposition of the system and conversely, apart from the system the method is—empty abstraction. To suggest, as does Hook,<sup>4</sup> that

<sup>1</sup> As Sidney Hook remarks in an article on "The Contemporary Significance of Hegel's Philosophy," *Philosophical Review*, Vol. 41 (1932), p. 249, "Although Hegel officially denies the reality of time, he recognizes its existence whenever he uses the words 'finite' and 'appearance.' Under the aspect of time the world confronts man as an ever-enduring process. Under the aspect of eternity the world is a completed system. But to the process belongs metaphysical primacy."

<sup>2</sup> "The Contemporary Significance of Hegel's Philosophy," *Philosophical Review*, Vol. 41 (1932), pp. 256 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Croce, Benedetto, *What is Living and What is Dead in the Philosophy of Hegel* (London, Macmillan, 1915).

<sup>4</sup> "The Contemporary Significance of Hegel's Philosophy," *Philosophical Review*, Vol. 41 (1932), p. 259.

Hegel's insight can be saved if instead of reading history as the necessary evolution of the spirit of freedom, or the autobiography of God, we view it more naturalistically as the slow and uncertain development of mind and the growth of reasonableness in the affairs of men

is to commit an error all the more pernicious because of its façade of common sense. For to imply that all we have to do to insure Hegel's contemporaneity is to abandon idealistic metaphysics for naturalism is to voice anew that perennial sophism, which from the standpoint of whiteheadian cosmology vitiates all naturalisms, positivisms, and empiricisms alike, the sophism, that is, of so foreshortening one's cosmological perspective as to avoid the necessity for facing up to the metaphysical presuppositions of one's naturalism.<sup>1</sup> This particular sophism is, of course, not native to naturalism. Existentialists too commit it when they think to reduce the hegelian cosmology to a personal perspective on the universe. But the fact is, as it is to the everlasting credit of Hegel to have so clearly seen, that all such reductionism, naturalistic or existentialistic, must fail—if for no other reason than that it leaves so much to be explained.

In a century such as ours in which so many philosophers are content with partial formulations, it is not the least of Hegel's merits to have provided a system which, whatever its defects of detail, satisfies the basic requirement of any cosmology; to leave no character of Being or Becoming unaccounted for.

Whether this system can stand today in its entirety as an alternative to its twentieth-century counterparts is another matter. The dogmas of science Hegel was called upon to explain or incorporate have long since been replaced. Indeed, it is a tribute to the greatness of his ideas that they have survived to transcend the limitations of their nineteenth-century scientific framework, since it is the inadequacy of this framework, a framework which is fundamentally incommensurate with Hegel's cosmological view, that makes it possible to call in question the validity of Hegel's equation of dialectic and process. It is because of this framework also that so many difficulties arise in connection with the notion of Time, difficulties which it must be admitted the hegelian view never cleanly disposes of. On the other hand, Whitehead is no more faultless than Hegel as concerns his conception of Time—especially as it relates to God. And from a more positive standpoint, Hegel's conception of deity as self-evolving, universe-encompassing Mind or Spirit provides a unity

<sup>1</sup> As Errol Harris so pertinently remarks, ". . . those who have revolted completely against idealism and have set their faces firmly against anything with the least suggestion of Hegelianism have succeeded only in repeating, in modern guise and in a new technical jargon, the philosophical position appropriate to an age of scientific progress prior to Hegel's time—a position which in our own day is utterly outdated and has long been obsolete." *Nature, Mind and Modern Science*, p. 255.

of concept lacking in its whiteheadian counterpart. Finally, considered as a philosophy of history, there is a continuity of development in the hegelian system. which continuity is not nearly so apparent in the more recent cosmological expositions. In sum, while we cannot with good metaphysical conscience adopt the hegelian cosmology intact, neither can we afford to lose its insights. Terminology changes. A Whitehead or an Alexander will marshal his thoughts in his own language. But in the basic ideas expressed he surely owes more to the Berlin master than he has ever acknowledged.

*Tulane University of Louisiana.*

# OBJECTIVITY AND REASON<sup>1</sup>

PROFESSOR ERROL E. HARRIS

THE need for objective standards of judgement is acutely felt in the bewilderment created by the world situation of our time, a bewilderment that is partly the result of the rapid advance of the natural sciences, with its profound effects upon metaphysical doctrines, religious beliefs and moral attitudes, and partly due to the intractable problems which have arisen in social and political fields. The progress of the sciences, while it seems to have given us secure knowledge of the world about us, has, at the same time, undermined confidence in the criteria of belief and judgement in the conduct of affairs which hitherto had served to guide mankind. Bereft of these the majority of men are unable to see a clear way through the complexities of modern political and economic life and are overwhelmed by the major problems that confront them. As examples of the major perplexities with which mankind is faced today, I shall mention only three:—

There is, first, the problem which faces the scientist, whose discoveries, despite their enormous possibilities for good, have become in their application to the methods of warfare a menace to the very continuance of life on earth. Can such a scientist with a clear conscience continue his researches? To do so is to put into the hands of politicians instruments of destruction from which none of us may escape: yet to refuse to do so is to hamper the growth and progress of human knowledge and human achievement. Can he, further, submit to the restrictions on intellectual liberty and the free exchange of scientific information so essential for scientific advance, which the national importance (and danger) of his discoveries forces the governments of modern states to impose upon him? If he flouts or resists these restrictions he is open to the charges of irresponsibility and disloyalty; yet if he allows considerations of patriotism to weigh with him, he may be charged with lack of objectivity. But by what objective standard or criterion can he reach a decision so vital for the pursuit of his vocation, and for the welfare of mankind?

Secondly, there is the problem of world peace. If a new major war were to break out, the use of thermo-nuclear weapons could not be prevented, and the chance of survival for human civilization (or even human life) would be extremely slender. Yet what means have we found of insurance against such an outbreak? No improvement has been made in methods of international politics which, in the past half-century have failed to prevent and may even be said to have led inexorably to two major wars, which very nearly extinguished western civilization, as the next almost certainly will. But any

<sup>1</sup> An inaugural lecture delivered in the University of the Witwatersrand.

effective international control of sovereign nations is prevented by the existence of implacably hostile and apparently irreconcilable ideologies—rival standards of appraisal in political affairs which, because they conflict, cannot all be "objective" and which all equally claim to be—though some of them, in the same breath, inveigh against and repudiate objectivity.

And, finally, there is the race problem, presenting us in South Africa (as well as in the world at large) with the apparent choice between the continuance, on the one hand, of western European culture at the sacrifice of the principles most vital to that culture, and the observance, on the other hand, of western European moral and political principles in our private and public contacts with the non-European races, at the risk of being overwhelmed by a more primitive culture. In judging of matters in which this conflict is involved, we tend to be influenced strongly by personal prejudices or sectional interests, which confuse our vision. But if we are to avoid these, by what objective standard can we judge?

In these perplexities, we cast about for certainties—for criteria of judgement, independent of prejudices, fears, ideologies and superstitions. But our bewilderment is increased in part by the variety and the inadequacy of such criteria as are suggested, and in part by the widespread denial that there are any to be found. The examples I have given are drawn from the sphere of morals and politics, but there are others in which the demand for ultimate criteria is felt. Primarily (and in a sense all-embracing) is the sphere of knowledge. We assume that there is an objective and absolute standard of truth, and that it is the task of the logician to reveal it. And knowledge has several forms. The question of criteria is somewhat different in the field of mathematics from what it is in that of the natural sciences, different again in the field of the social sciences, and the matter of religious truth and its criterion is yet another question. Secondly, the criterion of moral worth and of political justice is not *prima facie* the same as that of theoretical truth. And thirdly, the criterion of artistic merit presents another and yet more difficult problem.

Traditionally it has been considered the function of the philosopher to provide the knowledge of ultimate and objective standards in all these fields. But many modern philosophers have disowned their responsibility for any such task; and, whether we approve or not of this renunciation, we are forced to confess that philosophers as a class have spoken with so many different voices that they have succeeded in giving us no very definite guidance. It is not my intention to make a new attempt to discover these ultimate standards, but only to consider some of the consequences of the demand that they should be sought. I propose to discuss the implications both of asserting the

existence of objective standards, and of denying it, and I shall try in conclusion briefly to suggest a possible method of resolving the difficulties in the way of either alternative.

### I. CLAIMANTS FOR OBJECTIVITY

#### (a) *The Appeal to Reason.*

(i) The search for an objective standard springs from the desire for a final court of appeal, reference to which will settle all differences of opinion; and perhaps the earliest claimant to such ultimate authority is Divine Revelation, which has the advantage of complete universality covering all fields in which an objective standard can be demanded. But the difficulties besetting the appeal to this authority are as familiar as they are numerous. The Deity never speaks *in propria persona* nor *coram populo*, but always in the secret privacy of the consciousness of an individual devotee, who thereafter claims the divine authority for his pronouncements. The claim itself, accordingly, becomes subjective and we must seek an objective standard for deciding its genuineness. "The authority of the Scriptures," St. Augustine is reputed to have said,<sup>1</sup> "is greater than all the powers of the human mind." But what of the authority of St. Augustine? Without derogation of his saintliness, we are still forced to admit that, being but a man, his judgement was subject to human limitations. It follows that whatever he may tell us about the authority of the Scriptures must be subject to the same limitations. The difficulty is accentuated when, as is commonly the case, several conflicting pronouncements are all made with the same claim to divine authority. And even when there is no such competition between alternative versions of the Divine Word, its interpretation is liable to give rise to persistent dispute, for which the remedy would be the very objective standard which the claim to divine revelation leaves us still to seek.

(ii) Dispute, however, in its more dignified form is an appeal to argument, and the most respectable arguments are couched in the form of reasoning. It, therefore, becomes appropriate for theologians and philosophers to assert that Reason provides the ultimate standard. Wherever it can be demonstrated that judgement is subject to rational principles, its objectivity is considered to be established, and the appeal to reason is regarded as final. I shall argue later that there is a sense of "reason" in which its claim to objectivity is admissible. But this is not the sense in which it has always been used and understood. Plato thought of it as a set of purely intelligible "forms" by which we can measure the truth of our judgements as an artist measures the likeness of his picture by reference to the model. The simile, however, will not survive pressure. The supposed intelligible

<sup>1</sup> Vide W. H. Werkmeister, *A Philosophy of Science* (New York 1949), p. 11.

forms are not given to us for inspection, in knowledge, or in morals, or, for that matter, in any of the spheres where an objective standard is sought. The truth of propositions, especially in morality, cannot be tested by comparison with any model or any standard case. I need not dilate upon the difficulties of the Platonic theory of Forms (or Ideas). The literature on the subject is extensive enough. It will be sufficient to notice that Plato's pictorial and metaphorical accounts of the Forms cannot (and were not meant to) be taken literally. The Forms are not to be imagined as visible models of earthly things, but, remembering Plato's insistence that they are purely intelligible objects, we must surely conclude that they are the products of thinking, logical categories or universal concepts, arrived at by reflexion upon our common experience. But when so interpreted, they can no longer be thought of as models, and there can be no possibility of comparison or likeness between them and our ordinary judgements. And if the Forms are really a product of our own thinking and reflexion, they cannot serve as objective standards, because it is just this thinking and reflexion which stands in need of an objective test of its soundness and validity.

The traditional conception of reason, derived from Aristotle and adopted by the Schoolmen and (with some modification) by Descartes, was one according to which reason operates in two kindred ways. First, it intuits simple, self-evident truths, about which there can be no possibility of doubt, and to the knowledge of which the only alternative is blank ignorance. Secondly, it intuits with similar immediacy the logical connexions between two such simple and self-evident truths, and so, by a process of formal illation (or demonstration), linking a series of simple intuitions in a continuous chain, it can deduce conclusions from them which are not *ab initio* immediately self-evident. But it is more than doubtful that any examples can be produced of simple and purely self-evident principles that are not merely trivial and tautological, which can be immediately intuited by the intellect. And it is nowadays generally agreed that purely formal, linear deduction can give no information about concrete matters of fact—those matters in judging of which we have most need of an objective standard.

Professor Jacques Maritain, following St. Thomas, describes the intuitive function of reason as an immediate vision of Being.<sup>1</sup> He does not, however, explain in any intelligible way what he means by Being, or what sort of intellectual vision the mind can experience. He equates Being with God, but the substitution of the name does not help us to understand. The vision is not a sensuous vision, yet it is given no intelligible content; indeed, Maritain confesses that "it transcends concepts and ideas" and remains "a mystery for the

<sup>1</sup> Vide: *The Range of Reason* (London 1953), pp. 6 and 87 ff.

intellect." But a mystery can serve neither as a standard of judgement nor as a test of truth, and it is difficult to see how it can be the starting point of a rigorous or informative process of logical illation.

(iii) Another form in which the claim to objectivity has been made is associated both with divine revelation and with reason. It is held that the objective standard is the Law of Nature, which at times has been identified with the Law of God, at other times with the Law of Reason, and at yet other times with both at once. No theorist of Natural Law, however, has ever been able to make clear how it can be unmistakably discovered. Grotius, Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau all appealed to it, but each gave a different version of its rules, none wholly compatible with any other. Natural Law has not been, and (we may well suspect) cannot be, codified. It has, as Professor d'Entrèves points out<sup>1</sup>, been postulated as a system of universal law, as the rational foundation of ethics, as the ideal of jurisprudence and as the objective standard for just legislation. "It is," he says, "the quest for some immutable standard or pattern independent of [men's] choice and capable of carrying conviction."<sup>2</sup> But it is surely a quest which has never succeeded. Its protagonists have always been able to eulogise it in these absolute terms, but have never been able to agree upon its content. The reason for this is, moreover, not far to seek. The very notion of Natural Law sets it apart from and in contradistinction with human experience. Being ideal and immutable, it must be divorced from the constantly changing standards which men in the course of history have recognized and adopted. It is none of these, they must be judged by it. But these historical standards are the fruits of human experience, and the one thing of which human beings have had no experience is a common yet immutable and ideal code of laws (whether moral or political). There is not and never has been a law known to men which was "independent of their choice and capable of carrying conviction." Accordingly, Natural Law may be given whatever content the jurist, the political and moral philosopher, or the theologian sees fit; and if we ask what it really enjoins, the answer is: *quot homines tot sententiae*.

This sort of appeal to reason for the supply of an ultimate standard is bound to fail, because the kind of standard required must be absolute and incorrigible. But to presume knowledge of such a standard is to presume omniscience. Short of that, if any such standard exists, it cannot be known; and if it is not known, it cannot be used as a criterion of judgement. Yet a standard of judgement by its very nature is one by which men actually judge.

#### (b) *The Appeal to Sense*

The failure of reason in these forms to provide an objective standard

<sup>1</sup> A. P. d'Entrèves, *Natural Law* (London, 1951).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

has led some thinkers to seek for it in a different direction. The physical world of material things seems solid, permanent and independent of our whims and fancies, could we not find an objective test, at least of truth, by reference to it? As our knowledge of the physical world seems to come to us most directly and immediately through the senses, sense-observation is widely held to be the only sure test of truth. This is the source of the well-known "verification principle," which denies truth, and even sense, to any statement, if there is no sense-observation which would be relevant to its verification. The view has, no doubt, been inspired by the success of experimental science, and rests on the belief that the appeal to sense-data is essentially scientific; but the conception of science implied, widespread though it be, is a hasty and mistaken view, for sense-perception cannot by itself provide us with any criterion of truth. The scientific theories of Copernicus and Newton are not the obvious deliverances of the senses. Shaw, in *St. Joan*, brings this home to us in La Trémouille's remark to the Archbishop, who has explained that Pythagoras was "a sage who held that the earth is round, and that it moves round the sun." "What an utter fool," replies La Trémouille, "couldn't he use his eyes?"

Several eminent scientists bear witness to the fact that the pure deliverances of sense do not serve as the final touchstone of scientific truth. Eddington, speaking as an astronomer, declares that "we do not believe our eyes unless we are first convinced that what they appear to tell us is credible."<sup>1</sup> And Dr. Agnes Arber<sup>2</sup> while asserting that "all direct evidence concerning biological questions depends upon the data the mind obtains from sense impressions" makes it quite clear that these are not bare data, but are affected both directly and indirectly by technical advances "which reorientate the mind towards natural things." "This reorientation," she continues, "in its turn educates the senses, which are far more dependent on the mind than is sometimes assumed."

The assumption that sensation gives us direct information about the existence and nature of material things is altogether false. In no case does this ever happen. An experience, for instance, which seems so simple and direct as that of seeing a match-box in a good light under "normal" conditions, is a much more complicated epistemological fact than is commonly realized. What I see is no more than certain colours in certain shapes, and these I am entitled to identify with, at most, three sides of the match-box. I see nothing of the other three sides, or of the inside of the box. Yet when I say that I see the match-box, I mean, without any qualification, that I am aware of the presence of a six-sided solid object, with an inside, the existence of

<sup>1</sup> *The Expanding Universe* (Cambridge, 1933) p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Vide *The Mind and the Eye* (Cambridge, 1954) p. 13 and cf. pp. 115 ff.

which I do not doubt. Yet none of this has been conveyed to me by sense, and it needs verification as much as does any speculative hypothesis. The colours and shapes that I see need not necessarily represent a material thing, any more than did Macbeth's vision of the dagger. They usually are not the exact colours and shapes which I take the object (e.g. the match-box) to have (the shape may be perspectively distorted and the colour modified by reflected light) and my awareness of the unseen parts of the box is the result in part of imaginative supplementation, and in part of a quasi-inferential process. Whatever I may see, the actual existence of an object before me still has to be proved. And, as to the knowledge of the nature of the object: that, if it can be finally determined at all, requires very considerable research. It is not simply a matter of its "real" shape and colour. The physicist, for instance, will tell me that the box consists chiefly of empty space, separating from one another a vast number of electrical charges, which move about at immense speeds. This I cannot see or feel, and for the physicist it is an inference from innumerable data of various kinds (not all of them sensory) forming a systematic body of evidence.

Now the physical theory is only an immensely more complex example of what we commonly do when, on receiving certain sense-experiences, we conclude to the existence of certain material objects. The important point is that, however practised we have become at doing it, and however immediate our knowledge may seem in consequence, we do in an important sense *conclude* to the existence of what we observe. It is not given to us purely in sense. Consequently, not the simplest report of observation, like "There is a match-box" is verifiable purely by sensing. Its verification not only requires a large number of observations and sense-data, but it requires also a knowledge of their mutual relations: From what points of view were they perceived? What is their temporal relation to one another? What conditions of observation obtained in each case? (e.g. In what sort of light? Were any of them mirror-images or otherwise illusory?) Now complex inter-relations of sense-observations and the conditions under which they are made are not themselves revealed in sensation. They are the result of a process of ordering and co-ordinating, interpreting and inferring, without which the truth about the material world, if it is accessible to us at all, is not to be had. Sense itself provides us with no correlations or interpretations. These are the work of thought ordering a chaotic sensuous material, which William James described as "blooming and buzzing confusion" and Kant declared to be "as good as nothing" when regarded as a form of knowledge.<sup>1</sup> "If there are things that exist independently of us,"

<sup>1</sup> The truth of this view has recently been confirmed by the experience of the congenitally blind whose sight has been restored in adult life by modern

writes Bertrand Russell (to quote a somewhat hostile witness), "they cannot be the immediate objects of our sensations."<sup>1</sup>

If this is the case, sense-perception cannot provide us with the test and standard of truth for which we search. Its apparent deliverances are themselves in need of confirmation, and the means of assurance which are available to us, involving as they do ideal construction, interpretation and inference, are the very methods for the soundness of which we demand an objective standard.

## II. THE DENIAL OF OBJECTIVE STANDARDS

It is not surprising, therefore, to find that both scientists and philosophers, who begin with the belief in sense-observation as the test of truth, end by denying in principle that there are any objective standards of judgement. But I shall try to show that just as the assumption that there are objective standards has so far been defeated by the demand for their discovery, so the assertion that there are and can be none involves self-contradiction.

(i) This is easy to show in the case of the scientific renunciation of the claim to truth. Some modern physicists have ceased to claim that their theories are the truth about the material world; they are, they would say, at best probable, and must be regarded only as provisional: the most satisfactory account so far given of the observed phenomena. As far as this statement goes it is unexceptionable, but if it is taken to imply the assertion that there is and can be no ultimate standard of truth for the physicist (as is sometimes assumed), it becomes a contradiction. In the first place, what is probable must be an assumed or measurable distance from certainty. "Probable," if it means anything at all means "probably true." This is its common usage and any meaning which would deprive it of all relation to truth or certainty would make it altogether irrelevant to epistemology. If a theory is

surgery. This is described by Professor J. Z. Young: "The patient on opening his eyes for the first time gets little or no enjoyment; indeed, he finds the experience painful. He reports only a spinning mass of lights and colours. He proves to be quite unable to pick out objects by sight, to recognize what they are, or to name them. He has no conception of a space with objects in it, although he knows all about objects and their names by touch. 'Of course,' you will say, 'he must take a little time to learn to recognize them by sight.' Not a *little* time, but a very, very long time, in fact years. His brain has not been trained in the rules of seeing. We are not conscious that there are any such rules; we think we see, as we say 'naturally.' But we have in fact learned a whole set of rules during childhood." *Doubt and Certainty in Science*. J. Z. Young (Oxford, 1951) p. 62.

There can be no doubt that a similar process is involved in learning to perceive through the other senses besides vision, if we had but the means of discovering it.

<sup>1</sup> *The Problems of Philosophy* (Oxford, 1950) p. 13.

said to be probable, therefore, the speaker is presupposing some standard of truth by which to measure its probability (either in precise numerical terms or in a general and imprecise way). Secondly, to maintain that a theory is the most satisfactory provisional account that has so far been given of observed phenomena is to presume a standard by which to decide between less and more satisfactory accounts. The modesty of the physicist, therefore, is a tacit presumption of the existence of an objective standard, even though it does not reveal its nature; and it cannot without contradiction be used to deny the possibility of such a standard.

(ii) The philosophers who abjure objectivity are more absolute in their denials of the absolute. In modern thought there is a widespread tendency (either explicit or by implication) to repudiate ultimate standards of any kind. The old traditional questions about Truth, Goodness and Beauty have been abandoned as pseudo-problems by a large and influential school, while others propound positive doctrines which embrace subjectivism as an end in itself.

Existentialism is an example of the second type. Those of its exponents who pay homage of any sort to reason, do so in obscure language, which, if it can be understood at all, seems to offer no clear standard for objective judgement. Karl Jaspers tells us<sup>1</sup> that "reason has no assured stability," that it is "opposed to the tendency to free oneself from the necessity for all further thought by once and for all accepting irrevocably fixed ideas." It derives its criterion from its own nature, he says, yet does not acknowledge this criterion as absolutely valid. Though it seeks the absolute unity, with which it strives to become one, this "one" which reason seeks is unattainable. There may be some element of truth in these statements and we might accept them, if we could understand them, but as they stand they give us little hope that reason is the source of objectivity. Nor is it in the least clear from what Jaspers says of it what the absolute unity is towards which reason is supposed to strive. Consequently, if it can serve as an objective standard it is one that remains wholly mysterious—a standard, in short, by which it is impossible to judge.

Other existentialists pay less respect to reason. In fact, they reject it. Kirkegaard abandons himself to despair for very lack of objective certainty. He embraces faith as the "category of despair" and revels henceforward in what is acknowledged to be absurd, accepting Tertullian's motto: *Credo quia absurdum*. Sartre and others adopt a similar position, identifying personality with irrational and unmotivated will ("gratuité") as the essence of its existence. Aimlessness, irrationality, absurdity and despair are the notes which form the tonic chord of this philosophy, cutting it loose from any objective standard of judgement. It follows that, as Professor J. H. Paton says,

<sup>1</sup> *Reason and Anti-Reason in Our Time* (London, 1952) pp. 39-42.

"existentialism is not a theory to argue about, but rather an attitude to decide about—either for or against—unless indeed we decide to ignore it altogether."<sup>1</sup> In short, it is a very extreme and uncompromising form of subjectivism.

But, of course, irrationalism is recognizable only by reference to a rational standard; absurdity is measured by self-consistency and coherence, and even *gratuité*, the completely undetermined choice, is recommended, we must presume, as in some sense good, and this claim must be defensible by reference to some standard, or it can have neither appeal nor importance. If every such standard is rejected we may safely do as Paton suggests and decide to ignore it altogether.

(iii) More serious are the various forms of positivism that have recently invaded, especially, the English-speaking world. Modern Logical Positivism begins from the verification principle and issues almost at once in two conclusions. One is the rejection of metaphysics because its propositions are in principle unverifiable by sense-observation. The determination of ultimate standards (other than sense-data) is in this way metaphysical, and we must expect to see their existence denied in every branch of philosophic criticism. The second is the reduction of logical necessity to tautology. Logical propositions are necessarily true, not because they can be verified by sense-perception, but because they give no factual information, and are the tautologous consequences of the definitions of terms. Consequently, logic becomes the study of linguistic usage either common or (in the various sciences) technical. The logical consequences of a statement depend upon the use of the terms contained in it. By that use they are defined, or conversely, as they are defined, so their use is determined. Logic, accordingly, is the study of the rules for the usage of words in a language and the new philosophical method is linguistic analysis.

This method is the direct descendent of the verification principle and though the more extreme forms of positivism have recently themselves been subjected to analysis, in the interests of more popular linguistic usages, and contemporary empiricists often announce their rejection of logical positivism, what they reject is not the fundamental assumption of the primacy of sense-perception, but only certain inconvenient accompaniments of that doctrine, and any criticism affecting the foundations of the earlier positivism will affect the linguistic analyst likewise.

A corollary of the notion of logic canvassed by this school is that logical necessity depends in the last resort on arbitrary convention. The meaning and usage of words is not determined by anything in the nature of things, but is an arbitrary symbolism which has either become customary or may be determined at will by mutual agreement.

<sup>1</sup> *In Defence of Reason* (London, 1951) p. 214.

Consequently, logic becomes irrelevant to truth, and the relevance of reason becomes questionable. Truth must, on this view, be entirely inductive. If it is not the direct agreement of observation statements with the actual occurrence of sense-data, it must be the agreement between empirical generalizations and a probability estimate based on the constant conjunction of observed phenomena in the past. Doubts cast on the validity of inductive argument have been pronounced by exponents of this doctrine to be "unreasonable," but what sense of "reason" is here intended it is difficult to understand—unless it means simply what conforms to the doctrines of empiricism.

We have already seen, however, that the deliverances of the senses provide no ultimate standard of truth or verification, and with the collapse of the positivist verification principle the whole doctrine collapses, because no standard of verification remains. No appeal to reason is possible, for inductive reasoning is held to derive its efficacy from sense, and deductive reasoning to be no more than the development of tautologies resting upon arbitrary linguistic convention. When these conclusions are applied to the theory from which they follow, it is itself resolved either into an arbitrary recommendation for linguistic usage (with nothing to recommend it), or an empirical hypothesis in principle unverifiable, and so, according to its own strictures, meaningless.

Nevertheless, it has inspired kindred doctrines in ethics and political theory, the effect of which is to deny the existence of ultimate standards as well as the need for them. Statements of moral and political appraisal are not normally tautological nor can they be empirically verified in the way that ordinary factual statements can be. What observations, for instance, could verify the assertion that it is *right* to fulfil promises? It has been maintained, therefore, that such statements are not factual and that they have no descriptive force, but are mere expressions of feeling or are veiled commands. The implication inevitably is that they are purely subjective, for, if they are in no way descriptive, it makes no difference whether they are said to be prescriptive (commands) or simply emotive. If a command is not a mere expression of feeling, it must be based (if only implicitly) on a judgement that is relative to some objective standard, but in that case moral statements would have descriptive force; if "Do so-and-so" means more than "I want (or would like) you to do so-and-so," it implies "Your doing so-and-so would be good," and that entails (if "good" is not to be simply what I like) that "So-and-so conforms to a certain standard"—which is a factual assertion. Accordingly, we need consider only the consequences of reducing moral appraisals to expressions of feeling.

It is obvious that, on this view, no objective standard is admissible because feelings cannot be referred to any kind of standard. It is

precisely for this reason that there can be no dispute over personal tastes. A purely subjective morality of the sort alleged would thus be wholly irrational, and policies based on moral prescriptions would, in consequence, be purely arbitrary. Feelings are inconstant and ephemeral phenomena and if moral appraisal does no more than express feelings, no such appraisal can ever have universal application. "X is good" must mean: "I feel favourably disposed to X." But there is no guarantee that I shall continue to feel in this way. As soon as we attempt to import a universal significance into the statement it becomes to some extent descriptive. "X is always to be favoured," or, "All X's are to be favoured" implies reference to a fact other than feeling which would justify the statement—i.e. the fact that X is of a certain character. Accordingly, a purely emotive ethic would make the distinctions between good and bad, right and wrong, which determine our choices, indefinitely variable and entirely arbitrary. And that is tantamount to annulling the distinctions altogether. To do this, however, is to do away with morality and to deny the common facts of moral experience. For the distinguishing feature of morality is its prescription of duties, which do not depend on mere inclination or feeling, and rules with universal application. The emotive theory of ethics must, therefore, be false, for if it were true there would be no morality and so no moral phenomena for it to explain.

The confusion which has led thinkers to propound such a theory is one between mere feeling and approval. They commonly speak of a feeling of approval as that which moral statements express. It is, of course, true that moral appraisals are expressions of approval or disapproval—but that is by no means the same as expressions of mere feeling. Approval is a judgement involving a criterion of value, and, as it is commonly used, the word implies a criterion other than feeling. "I approve of smoking" is not the same as "I like smoking," for it commits me to permitting the practice by others for whom my pleasure is irrelevant. If we suspect that an expression of approval is no more than one of liking, we regard it as insincere. Further, there is no absurdity in saying "I like smoking, but I disapprove of it," or "Though it would give me great pleasure to knock him down, I disapprove of violence." This is not to deny that feelings of certain recognizable kinds accompany approval and disapproval, but only that they are the same thing. Nor can approval be a feeling of some other kind than mere liking, because to approve is to judge worthy of choice, and judgement is not feeling. Moreover, the criterion of the judgement cannot be a feeling of approval, because any such feeling presupposes the judgement. I feel favourably disposed towards "X" because it is of a certain kind, and I cannot then explain of what kind it is by reference to the feeling. In other words, I approve of something because I think it good and I cannot say that I think it good because

I approve, without either tautology or circularity. I must, therefore, think it good for some reason independent of my feeling.

It is, therefore, no mistake to interpret the emotive theory as a repudiation of all moral values, and its consequences cannot be evaded by denying that it is such a repudiation, in the manner attempted by both Mr. Richard Robinson and Professor Ayer<sup>1</sup>. They both argue that to deny objective ground for moral evaluation is no refusal to evaluate in particular cases. Even indifference, they assert, is a morally evaluative attitude and it is not one that the theory entails. But that is precisely why the theory involves self-contradiction. If it were true, there could be no moral evaluation or approval in the proper and accepted sense of the word, for that implies reference to a standard other than personal feelings. But even indifference is recognized by the exponents of the theory as a morally evaluative attitude, and this fact in itself is evidence against the theory.

### III. THE FAILURE OF SUBJECTIVISM

If, on the one side, attempts to discover an objective standard have not succeeded, subjectivism, on the other, affords us no means of escape from the problem, and, whatever its form, its failure is inevitable, because it involves the paradox of scepticism. To assert that there is no objective standard is to reduce all theories and all preferences to prejudices, and this must apply equally to the subjectivist theory itself and to the decision to adopt it. But if the doctrine is no more than the personal prejudice of the thinker it is in no way superior to, and has no better claim to credence than, any that contradicts it and we are as free to disbelieve as to believe it. Worse than this, however, is the unavoidable fact that the very statement of a theory is an implicit claim to truth which presupposes the sort of objectivity of which subjectivism is the explicit rejection.

Yet its prevalence in contemporary thought has had far-reaching effects. Reason has been reduced to a mere instrument of the mind for calculating the means to ends that are not themselves the product of reason. Reason, it is widely held, is what Hume declared it to be, and rightly so; the slave of the passions. Logic has been thoroughly formalized and so becomes an instrument or calculus—a sort of machine which, properly operated, unerringly gives the right answer to any formal problem put to it. Sometimes it is even suggested that life might be wholly mechanized, even to thinking, if only we knew enough about electronics. No salutary exception is made even for that

<sup>1</sup> Vide: Richard Robinson "The Emotive Theory of Ethics," in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Sup. Vol. XXII, 1948, and A. J. Ayer "On the Analysis of Moral Judgement," *Horizon*, Vol. XX, No. 117, reprinted in *Philosophical Essays* (London, 1954).

knowledge; and the fact that such mechanization itself presupposes creative thinking is overlooked. But whether it is presumed or not, creative thinking is not regarded as the subject matter of logic.

Dr. Max Horkheimer has examined the consequences of this position in a penetrating study,<sup>1</sup> and finds it to be the cause of our bewilderment and the disease of our civilization. Reason, reduced to an instrument, in its turn reduces everything to a mere means, while it is incapable of determining any end. It devotes itself (as science) to the subjugation of nature, but it cannot prescribe any ultimate purpose for this subjugation. Because it is subjective, everything objective is reduced to mere external fact and is extruded from the human mind and personality, the development of which becomes, in consequence, either pointless or a mere means to some ulterior end which, again, can never be objectively formulated or identified. Horkheimer points out that the human person is itself (and especially, we may add, for empiricist philosophy) a part of nature, so that the subjugation of nature includes the subjugation of self—the repression of natural impulse in the interests of a scientific and industrial civilization. But as the self has no formulable end, “control of nature” (human or external) becomes an end in itself; and this is self-defeating and unsatisfying. The domination and suppression of natural impulse has no rational pretext and is resented, so that a revolt against civilized forms is generated, marked by a return to savagery, as was witnessed in the Nazism of the 1930's. This revolt, however, is complicated by its use of the techniques of civilization—the techniques of domination—and formalized, instrumental reason gives the new savagery a diabolical rationality and scientific skill.

“The machine,” writes Horkheimer, “has dropped its driver; it is racing blindly into space.”<sup>2</sup> Individuality is lost in and bulldozed by mass organization and mass production. Life is dominated by mass culture and imitation supplants creative effort. Modern total organizations, he maintains, become (in the nature of the case) divorced from spiritual values (which are despised as illusory) and individual capacities are reduced to mechanical functions. Efficiency, effort, dynamism are worshipped for their own sakes, and no objective is conceived for them to aim at. So that the Red Queen's remark to Alice has special application, that it takes all the running you can do to stay in the same place.

We have found, therefore, that while the demand for objectivity is not met the denial of it leads to even worse disaster, and we are caught in a dilemma in which we cannot rest. What is the remedy for this situation? Dr. Horkheimer calls for a new philosophy—not just a futile return to older doctrines like Thomism; or a dogmatic repudiation of dogma, like Positivism, but a real continuation of the specu-

<sup>1</sup> *The Eclipse of Reason* (O.U.P., New York, 1947)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

lative tradition of the past, the metaphysical systems of which, whatever their faults, were at least an appreciation of the necessity, if we are to retain sanity and avoid self-destruction, for a kind of reason that is objective in the sense that it can define "the objective goals of society."<sup>1</sup> He demands a new critique of reason which will, without glossing over the antithesis of subjective and objective, find some way of reconciling them. "The two concepts of reason," he says, "do not represent two separate and independent ways of mind, although their opposition expresses a real antinomy."<sup>2</sup> It is obviously impossible for me to embark upon any such ambitious attempt in this lecture, but I shall try to indicate some lines of approach to what might be a satisfactory solution of the problem of objectivity.

#### IV. THE REQUIREMENTS OF OBJECTIVITY

In each of the theories we have examined and rejected above, there is nevertheless some partial truth. There can be no standard independent of human experience, yet without a criterion that is in *some* sense objective there is no possibility of judgement. The question to decide is, In *what* sense is the standard objective?

When we demand objectivity in any field of investigation there are certain things that we wish to avoid and others that we are trying to ensure. We seek a concept or a theory which is not constantly liable to change with circumstances or with persons, but has a measure of stability despite such changes. It must be independent of personal likes and dislikes and of idiosyncratic tendencies. In other words, its truth or validity must be universal and necessary.

Feelings and emotions do not fulfil these requirements, nor do the deliverances of sense or flashes of intuition; but we do accept as stable and reliable a body of knowledge which has grown up systematically and steadily in the course of experience, and which consists of elements so related that they mutually support and confirm one another. Such a body of knowledge is subjective, no doubt, in the sense that it is somebody's experience (though it need not be, usually is not, and probably cannot be, confined to one person). But it is also objective in the sense that it cannot be easily upset. Just as it is not something immediately or casually acquired, so no single observation or casual experience is, by itself, enough to overthrow it. Such a body of knowledge is never, all at once, present to the mind of the person judging, but its parts are so intimately connected and interdependent, that they colour one another and the whole is implicitly brought to bear upon every relevant particular case in which judgement is called for. Such judgement, in consequence, is neither purely empirical nor the product of pure reason; it is both. It is empirical so far as it pre-

<sup>1</sup> *The Eclipse of Reason*, p. 175.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 174.

supposes a systematic body of knowledge built up in experience. It is also rational because that body of knowledge can only function as an objective standard in so far as its elements are rationally ordered as and systematically interrelated. For our reason is nothing more nor less than that capacity or principle operative in the mind which co-ordinates, interrelates and systematizes our experience. There is no department of human experience where this build-up of an integrated body of knowledge or conduct, providing the standard of judgement in particular situations, might not be illustrated, but I shall cite examples from only three fields, each of special importance.

(I) The first comes from physical science, and as I cannot here claim any authority of my own, I must rely on the testimony of those who can. My witnesses are to be Albert Einstein, Max Planck and Sir Arthur Eddington. It has been argued that the modern developments in physics have forced scientists to abandon objective standards,<sup>1</sup> but neither Planck nor Einstein accepts such a view. Einstein's opinion is recorded by James Murphy, as follows:

"I believe that events in nature are controlled by a much stricter and more closely binding law than we suspect to-day, when we speak of one event being the cause of another. Our concept here is confined to one happening within one time-section. It is dissected from the whole process. Our present rough way of applying the causal principle is quite superficial. We are like a child who judges a poem by the rhyme and knows nothing of the rhythmic pattern. Or we are like a juvenile learner at the piano, just relating one note to that which immediately precedes or follows. To an extent this may be very well when one is dealing with very simple and primitive compositions; but it will not do for the interpretation of a Bach fugue. Quantum physics has presented us with very complex processes and to meet them we must further enlarge and refine our concept of causality."<sup>2</sup>

The strong suggestion here of a complex system in the light of which we judge is carried further by Planck. The idea of causality, he maintains, conceived as a relation between local, isolable events, has been transformed into one which involves a total physical system not divisible into separate events.<sup>3</sup> We cannot, therefore, discover the laws of physics by more and more minute analysis, but only by conceiving the physical universe as a single system and by attending to the structural interrelation of its parts.<sup>4</sup> But this single system is nothing barely given in sense, nor merely deduced by *a priori* thinking, but is a "world-picture" constructed by the scientist in the

<sup>1</sup> E.g. by T. D. Weldon, *The Vocabulary of Politics* (Harmondsworth, 1953), p. 30 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Max Planck, *Where is Science Going?* (London, 1933), Epilogue, pp. 203-4.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *The Universe in the Light of Modern Physics* (London, 1931) pp. 23-6.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *The Philosophy of Physics* (London, 1936), p. 33.

arduous course of his researches, not only experimental but also by way of speculative interpretation and imaginative construction satisfying the demand of logical coherence.<sup>1</sup>

Eddington, from a somewhat different angle, corroborates this conception of physical truth (or reality) as a structure of facts and events satisfying a standard of internal coherence. "The external world of physics," he writes, "is thus a symposium of the worlds presented to different view-points. There is general agreement as to the principles on which the symposium should be formed... Assuming that the symposium has been correctly carried out, the external world and all that appears in it are called real without further ado. When we (scientists) assert of anything in the external world that it is real and that it exists, we are expressing our belief that the rules of the symposium have been correctly applied—that it is not a false concept introduced by an error in the process of synthesis, or a hallucination belonging to one individual consciousness, or an incomplete representation which embraces certain view-points, but conflicts with others."<sup>2</sup>

The objective criterion of physical truth, therefore, is the total systematic body of physical knowledge built up in the course of the progress of the science. There is no ideal archetype of such knowledge to which the scientist can refer, nor can mere armchair ratiocination provide him with a standard. Yet he is not abandoned to the whims and fancies of his imagination. Experience provides him with his criterion, but it is not bare sense-experience uninformed by thought. It is the whole rationally systematized body of scientific experience—the total world-picture that scientific evidence has so far provided.<sup>3</sup>

(2) Collingwood gave an even clearer account of the criterion of historical truth.<sup>4</sup> There is no infallible authority, he emphatically asserts, to which the historian can refer. All "authorities" are themselves subject, and must be subjected, to criticism. And the "authorities" to be examined are not only the writings of other historians, but documents, inscriptions, archaeological remains and everything else that can rank as historical evidence. None of these may be accepted on its face value, for each of them itself raises an historical problem as to its authenticity. This can be tested only in the light of historical knowledge itself, which, Collingwood maintains, is never given to us ready-made. It is an imaginative reconstruction of the past, which is at the same time a logical (or rational) reconstruction—he calls it the work of the *a priori* imagination, to indicate that though imaginative

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Where is Science Going?* Ch. III, esp. pp. 85–6, 88, 92–5.

<sup>2</sup> *The Nature of the Physical World* (Cambridge, 1933), pp. 284–5.

<sup>3</sup> A similar account of biological knowledge is given by Dr. Agnes Arber, *op. cit.*, pp. 28–9.

<sup>4</sup> Vide *The Idea of History* (Oxford, 1946), p. 238 ff.

it is in no way arbitrary. And this idea or picture of the past is constantly augmented, corrected and made more complete by criticizing, comparing and systematizing the evidence. Strictly, therefore, history has neither authorities nor data, all its evidence must be treated critically and it can be criticized only in the light of the total conception of the past—the body of historical knowledge—built up in the course of the historian's researches. "It is thus the historian's picture of the past," says Collingwood, "the product of his own *a priori* imagination, that has to justify the sources used in its construction. These sources are sources, that is to say credence is given to them, only because they are in this way justified . . . The critical historian has to discover and correct all . . . kinds of falsification. He does it and can only do it, by considering whether the picture of the past to which the evidence leads him, is a coherent and continuous picture, one which makes sense."<sup>1</sup>

(3) My third example is the account of the moral life and the moral criterion developed by Professor A. Macbeth in his Gifford Lectures; an account which he is able to support by the detailed descriptions of the manner of life of a number of diverse peoples given in the work of modern anthropologists. Neither rules nor ends taken in isolation, he maintains, provide the criteria for moral judgements. They themselves can be valued and are referable to a standard which they do not, taken singly, provide. This standard is a complete way of life—a structure of ends and means, dictated in part by personal needs and desires, in part by the needs and desires of others and the requirements of social co-operation. These are not mutually independent and they require mutual adjustment and regulation if they are to be compatible, and if lasting or adequate satisfaction is to be achieved. The regulation and organization of desires is twofold. On the one hand, we grade satisfactions in an order of importance when our desires conflict, and some are subordinated to others; and, on the other, as all, even of those which are mutually compatible, cannot be satisfied at once, they are set in an order of temporal priority. Again, seeing that none of our needs can be adequately supplied except through social co-operation, and that we have (apart from this fact) social needs of a psychological character, our actions and desires must be adjusted to those of other people, and the organization of life becomes, by this circumstance, highly complex. So there emerges a way of life of a people, which in practice is found to be the most completely satisfying that their circumstances (including their knowledge and beliefs about themselves and their environment) allow. It is by reference to this organized system of life, with its interdependent rules and ends, duties and services, customs and institutions, that moral appraisal is made. Macbeth

<sup>1</sup> *The Idea of History*, p. 245.

sums up the position thus: "When we consider the ends which men pursue, to discover which of them are really good, we find that we have to consider these ends, which have their origin in man's needs and the desires to which these needs give rise, as parts of a system of ends, in which not only the ends of the individual but those of other individuals as well, are so integrated that they can find realization consistently with one another. Only ends which fit into the structure of this system are really desirable; and they are desirable only in the form in which they fit into it. So that we cannot discover which ends are good without taking account of the structural pattern of the form of life in which they are realized . . ."<sup>1</sup>

While the details of this structural pattern vary with differing culture, Macbeath claims to find a common general form in all patterns he examines, and he asserts that certain universal features are revealed in the anthropologists' descriptions, which are rooted in human nature and are not relative to cultural conditions. It is thus possible to find in the coherent structure of a society a standard of moral judgement which is both objective for the people who apply it, and yet relative to their knowledge and social experience, and one which at the same time contains the seeds of a universal moral standard.

On the evidence of the foregoing examples, we may, in conclusion, accept the definition of rational conduct given by Professor Michael Oakshott as "acting in such a way that the coherence of the activity to which the conduct belongs is preserved and possibly enhanced."<sup>2</sup> This proves to be applicable to every sphere of intelligent activity, theoretical and practical, and it gives us a sense of "rational" that enables us to find in reason a standard that can satisfy the requirements of objectivity.

*University of Witwatersrand.*

<sup>1</sup> *Experiments in Living* (London, 1952), p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> Vide *The Cambridge Journal*, Vol. IV, 1950-1, p. 20.

## DISCUSSION:

### LOGIC AND PHILOSOPHY

I wish to offer some comments on the extent to which the methods of Linguistic Analysis and of Logical Positivism have been reflected in your Journal during recent years. These methods have, within their limits, been established, proved fruitful and deserve respect. Nevertheless I get the impression that more and better results are expected from them than, in the nature of things, they can give.

There seems to be an assumption that if we could develop a language in which each word is given a precise and definite meaning,—approximating in precision and definiteness to the meaning of a symbol used in mathematics,—the philosophers would have at their disposal an additional and powerful weapon. That is an assumption I want to question.

Language has been developed by men as one of the means by which they can communicate their thoughts and feelings to each other. Many of these thoughts and feelings do not admit of precise definition. They vary in form and in feeling tone from day to day in the case of the same person, and from person to person in any given social group.

Let us, for the purpose of this essay, call the forms in which particular thoughts and feelings are present in the mind by the name of "concepts" and assume that, so far as language meets the needs of communication, there is a word for each concept.

Some of these concepts refer to things that are visible, tangible or otherwise capable of being perceived precisely by normal persons. The words referring to these concepts can be defined exactly, and their correct use in any given context may convey the same meaning to every hearer or reader.

As the concepts become more subtle and less "sensible" it becomes more difficult to represent them by words that will mean the same things to different people.

There is a class of concepts in which this is true to an exceptional degree. These are our concepts of values and qualities of experience. Examples are goodness, truth, beauty, conscious, unconscious, being, wisdom, power, justice, success, honour, freedom, faith, courage. These are the concepts by which people live. They determine the ends towards which a man's energies will be directed. There are many difficulties in discussing these concepts effectively and rationally by means of spoken or written language.

A particular concept is seldom, if ever, clearly and compactly organized in the mind. It is moderately clear at the centre, but shades off into a hinterland of vague knowledge and feeling which is ill defined and which contains parts that drift in and out of consciousness according to the occasion which evokes them.

The qualities of the concept are to some extent unique. They cannot be described by likening them to something else which they exactly resemble. The difficulty is like that which would be experienced in describing the colour violet to one who has never seen it.

The concept is liable to change its form in the mind of the same individual for reasons such as a change of mood, increased knowledge and experience, the mental development that comes with the years, or the effect of prolonged contemplation.

Not only does the concept as it exists in the mind of one man alter from time to time. It alters also from man to man at the same time.

## DISCUSSION

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There is a general tendency for the average content of a concept to alter from generation to generation as the result of social and cultural changes. For example the content of the concept signified by the word "justice" has altered continuously throughout the historical period.

If words were to be used with as much precision and stability of meaning as is necessary in the use of mathematical symbols I think the number of words required and the speed with which they would grow obsolete would create an insoluble problem. I suspect that certain fundamental changes in our inherited mental structure and thought forms would also be necessary. I think language does not work that way and it is not necessary to discuss the imaginary problem.

I suppose men of a sort have been using words of a sort for, maybe, a million years. Throughout most of that time, it seems that language was used mainly for evocative purposes. Modern languages are more complex and can be used in a greater variety of ways, so we are inclined to forget or to overlook the fact that the main function of language continues to be evocative. This is,—in different degrees,—as true among scientists and philosophers as it is among simple people. Language is one of the means of communication among people. What it has to communicate is experience, emotional, intellectual or both, and nothing else. Words may be spoken orally or they may be written or printed. They may be stored in volumes, and sold in the market as merchandise. In whatever form they are used they remain dead unless they can create in the mind of the hearer or reader an experience which is in some way (not always the same way) analogous to the experience in the mind of the author when he wrote them. The recipient may accept or reject the kind of experience suggested to him, but it is the experience he judges.

During the many thousands of years that men have been using words, the highly developed languages have become surprisingly adaptable. The same words have become capable of carrying a surprising variety of meanings and shades of meaning. The skilled practitioner can use them with the precision and detachment necessary in logic, or he can blend them in patterns in such a way that the separate word meanings merge into and qualify each other, so that a more subtle and complex meaning can be carried by the pattern as a whole.

The philosopher who wants to discuss the experience of living is generally able to find, or invent, language suitable for his purpose.

It is not possible for a man to look at life as an observer standing outside that which he studies. He is himself an innate organic part of it. The subjective and the objective cannot be separated in experience. No one has been able to draw a satisfying line of demarcation between the being of the individual and the being of the total environment (material, intellectual and spiritual) to which he responds consciously and unconsciously.

In the constantly changing incidents of experience that constitute the total experience of the individual there is one thing that remains constant. That is his identity with his consciousness of that identity and an innate necessity to behave actively and passively in his encounter with phenomena, in a way that will preserve that identity as an individual being, and if possible, extend and develop it.

It is from this experience on the part of countless individuals that concepts of value have arisen. The forms in which they are expressed have grown in depth and clarity with the intellectual progress of the race from prehistoric times. Their significance is in the kind of experience which they reveal rather than in the methods by which people sought to express them at different times and in different places. They carry implications about the nature of human life and of the reality in which it participates.

# P H I L O S O P H Y

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I quote a paragraph from Einstein and Infeld in their book "*The Evolution of Physics*":—

"Science is not just a collection of laws, a catalogue of unrelated parts. It is a creation of the human mind, with its freely invented ideas and concepts. Physical theories try to form a picture of reality, and to establish its connection with the wide world of sense impressions. Thus, the only justification for our mental structure is whether, and in what way, our theories form such a link."

There is an analogous truth in philosophy, though the philosopher's field covers the whole of experience and not only "the wide world of sense impressions."

In dealing with things so intimately connected with the experience of living (which is always passing from the known to the unknown) as value concepts are, logical proofs or finalities of any sort are not to be expected or, I think, desired. It is a hopeful and stimulating, rather than a discouraging, thought that, judging by precedents, many of the theories of modern physics and of modern philosophy will in their turn be superseded or modified in the light of new experience "if men do not give up the quest or grow weary of the toil."

N. McCracken.

## NEW BOOKS

*Aristotle: the Nicomachean Ethics*, translated and introduced by SIR DAVID ROSS. (London, Oxford University Press, 1954 (The World's Classics, No. 546). Pp. xxxiv + 284. Price 5s.)

Sir David Ross's version of the *Nicomachean Ethics* first appeared in the Oxford translation of Aristotle in 1925, and immediately became standard. Now, however, it makes a welcome addition to the World's Classics series, prefaced by an introduction in which Sir David summarizes Aristotle's argument and comments briefly upon it. Many of the original footnotes have been retained, and so has the analytical table of contents, which also provides chapter-headings throughout the work. The index, too, has been kept, slightly abbreviated.

The Oxford University Press is to be congratulated on bringing out the *Nicomachean Ethics* in a popular series (and of pocket size too); its enterprise deserves a warm welcome and the best of good wishes, for this is a work which can scarcely fail to illuminate the mind of the intelligent layman who reads it carefully, besides being that one of Aristotle's writings which he can most easily and successfully study without extensive scholarly aids.

D. A. REES.

*The Unconscious Origins of Berkeley's Philosophy*. By J. O. WISDOM. (Hogarth Press, 25s.)

Part I of this book is an exposition of Berkeley's philosophy; Part II is an account of his life, and Part III is a series of interpretations, along psycho-analytic lines, of his unconscious motivation.

Dr. Wisdom suggests that there are two ways in which Berkeley's philosophy can be interpreted. According to the traditional account, Berkeley believed that natural objects exist only in so far as they can be perceived by an observer; and it is supposed that he failed to recognise that the arguments which disposed of Matter could be used also to dispose of the Self and God. Dr. Wisdom labels this view "solipsist." According to the second interpretation, which is in the main that of Dr. Luce and Professor Jessop, Berkeley was influenced by Malebranche no less than by Locke, and his main concern was to show that God, not Matter, is the cause of our ideas. This is said to constitute his "considered philosophy"—a philosophy which he never abandoned or modified later in life. Dr. Wisdom accepts the "considered philosophy" as Berkeley's conscious intention, and gives psycho-analytic reasons why, at any rate early in life, Berkeley found this philosophy emotionally satisfying. He suggests also that there are reasons why, in spite of himself, Berkeley sometimes allowed the sceptical and solipsistic trends in his thought to break through.

A psycho-analytic interpretation involves the fitting together of a large number of pieces of information. To summarize the psycho-analytic section of this book without giving supporting evidence would make no sense; and I shall limit myself to indicating by one or two examples the sort of thing that Dr. Wisdom is attempting to do. His key concepts are those of *introduction*, *projection*, *splitting* and *scotomisation*. In psycho-analytic theory there is assumed to be a splitting mechanism, as a result of which the child has fantasies of both "good" and "bad" objects (where "objects" includes e.g. mother, breast, milk, faeces). There may be a strong desire to incorporate (or *introject*) "good"

objects, but "bad" objects constitute a serious danger. Objects that are put outside (or *projected*) are at a safer distance. ("Outside" here appears to mean outside in relation to body-awareness or body-schema.) Scotomisation (literally "darkening over") may be said to indicate the phantasy "If I don't see it it isn't there." The child sets up, as it were, an iron-curtain beyond which all dangerous objects are blotted out. Using these concepts, Dr. Wisdom suggests that for Berkeley *Matter* constitutes the "bad" object (poison, bad faeces), and that this "bad" object had to be projected and then scotomised, while it is God who, by means of "good" faeces, must replace Matter as the cause of the ordered arrangement of our ideas. The general claim is thus that there are psycho-analytic reasons why the "considered philosophy" should be regarded as the correct interpretation. Again, just as *esse percipi* was used to dispose of poisonous substances in the outside world, so the tar-water philosophy was an attempt to be rid of internal poison. Berkeley did not abandon the *esse percipi* philosophy later in life, but it ceased to have the same emotional significance for him; his emotional problem had shifted, and he was concerned with internal rather than external poison. Much else is interpreted, for example, his hostility to deists and mathematicians, his marriage at the age of 43, his Bermuda project, the erasure of his father's name from a document, a curious provision in his will, and so on. Finally Dr. Wisdom offers a theory of psycho-somatic disorder, which, though not clinically established, fits in, so he claims, with what is known of Berkeley's health.

What will the average philosophical reader make of a book of this kind? There are, I think, three questions in particular with which he will have to come to terms. (1) Has psycho-analytic theory the status which Dr. Wisdom claims for it? (2) Does it make sense, even so, to attempt to analyse people of a past age? (3) On the assumption that it does, is it plausible to suppose that Dr. Wisdom's interpretations, or something similar, are the correct ones?

(1) Those who are not prepared to take psycho-analytic theory seriously will, of course, be unconvinced by the whole project. To an ordinary person, certainly, much of its jargon is grotesque and absurd. Informed that "God cemented the world . . . by means of pure faeces" (p. 181) or that the Central Bank advocated in *The Querist* "was the great bowel capable of defecating all the money that was needed" (p. 164), the average reader can scarcely be expected to do more than raise his eyebrows. It is not, I think, the *shocking* nature of such interpretations which constitutes the stumbling block, but their failure to strike home or have any emotional significance except in clinical situations. Dr. Wisdom does not *argue* for the truth of psycho-analytic theory, nor does he attempt to sweeten the psycho-analytic pill which the reader is required to swallow. This, however, is not his purpose; and some would say that in any case the pill is not one which ought to be sweetened.

Even the sceptical reader, however, may be convinced by the general notion of Matter as something *dangerous*, which Berkeley had to *shut out*; and those philosophers who say that Berkeley put Matter "behind a metaphysical iron-curtain" may agree that the concept of *scotomisation* could conceivably indicate something of his motivation in doing so. What is certainly unpalatable is to suppose that Parts I and II of this book are a serious piece of Berkeleian scholarship, and that Part III, though with the same high standards of lucidity and thoroughness, is simply a curious lapse.

I do not wish to suggest that the theoretical foundations of psycho-analysis are all that they should be. Controlled validation is agreed to present a problem, and it is unfortunately all too true that many clinicians are deplorably insensitive on the question of what constitutes valid evidence. It might even be said that *any* interpretation will fit *any* piece of behaviour if enough use is

made of symbolism and if the fit is loose enough. The magic word "over-determined" allows for the legitimacy of several incompatible interpretations; and their validity seems to be tested less by their correspondence with alleged fact than by the effect which they have on the patient. In spite of these difficulties, however, there is no serious doubt that there is plenty of empirical evidence for *something*.

(2) A historical analysis has difficulties of its own. There is no transference situation, and, as Dr. Wisdom points out, no noting of associations and behaviour during treatment. In Berkeley's case, too, there is little knowledge of early childhood. Dr. Wisdom's claim that his interpretations, being of "a well-recognized clinical type" are not "purely speculative" (p. 3) is not entirely convincing. Admittedly the difficulty is one that applies to all historical reconstruction; but some readers will inevitably be dissatisfied with an enquiry where a decisive experiment is a temporal impossibility and where the only appeal is to the individual verdict of "plausible" or not "plausible."

(3) Clinical evidence shows fairly convincingly that anal fantasies such as those described by Dr. Wisdom do occur; and I do not think that any major objection could be taken to his interpretations on clinical grounds. The chief objection to them, on my view, is that the picture of Berkeley on which they are based seems rather out of proportion. Dr. Wisdom tends to regard Berkeley as a system-builder whose thought was dominated by unconscious phantasy. My own impression is rather different. I would suggest that Berkeley did not think of himself as a system-builder at all, but as an apostle of common sense. One of his main purposes was to attempt to safeguard religious belief by the removal of verbal rubbish; and to say that he had a "metaphysic," as Dr. Wisdom does, seems to me quite misleading. If I am right, it does not follow that Dr. Wisdom's interpretations are necessarily wrong, but they become rather less convincing, and the resultant picture of Berkeley's philosophy has less the "feel" of an anal phantasy. A further point is this. It is not always clear whether Dr. Wisdom intends to be *disparaging* to Berkeley or not. He does not dispute that he was "a really fine character" (p. 227), and agrees in principle that "the analysis of a philosopher does not in itself refute the philosophy" (p. 230). But he also says, "His metaphysic taken as a whole is a fantasy" (p. 3). Possibly the spelling "phantasy" is intended, the p-h indicating the psycho-analytic semi-technical term; but whether this is so or not it seems clear that the word is meant disparagingly, the suggestion being, presumably, that Berkeley was in some way out of touch with the reality situation. It does not, of course, follow that, where behaviour is rational, psycho-analytic explanations are superfluous. Dr. Wisdom agrees that Berkeley's philosophy was a logical development of beliefs current at the time; but this, he maintains, does not preclude us from asking *what it was in Berkeley* that caused him to react to the existing intellectual climate in the way that he did. Nevertheless I think it is correct to say that psycho-analytic explanations are at their most plausible where there are obvious irrationalities. It follows, therefore, that those who are satisfied on independent grounds that Berkeley's philosophy was a curiosity rather than a serious contribution to knowledge are the most likely people to be convinced by Dr. Wisdom; and if they believe, too, that the Bermuda project was a mad adventure rather than practical politics, and that the praises of tar-water were a less than justifiable aberration, the case is all the stronger. Dr. Wisdom evidently *does* believe that Berkeley's philosophy was a curiosity; but for those, like myself, who do not, the argument loses some of its compelling power.

On the question of assessing the book as a whole, my personal view is that Part III, the psycho-analytic section, should be taken seriously no less than

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Parts I and II. I do not doubt, in view of present-day clinical knowledge, that Dr. Wisdom's interpretations *could be* right. Whether they actually *are* right is a different matter, and one that is far more uncertain.

T. R. MILES.

*The Life of David Hume.* By ERNEST CAMPBELL MOSSNER. (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson & Sons. 1955 (Imprint 1954). Pp. xx + 683. 42s.)

The volume is an impressive one, even externally, for it is in a large format, is both aesthetically and technically very well printed, is illustrated, and has a binding of white buckram lettered in gold. What this handsome vehicle carries is a considerable contribution of learning. The author, Professor of Literature in the University of Texas, has been at work on Hume for nearly twenty years. Some of his findings have been published in about a dozen articles (which deserve to be collected), in an admirable book, *The Forgotten Hume* (1943, New York), and, in collaboration with Professor Klibansky, in *New Letters of David Hume* (1954, Oxford). A specialist in the literature of the eighteenth century, he had already issued a full-length study, *Bishop Butler and the Age of Reason* (1936, New York). He now presents us with what must at once take rank as the standard biography of Hume, one that adds so much new material to Hill Burton's large *Life* (1846) and to Greig's (1931) that from now on no one will be able to write reliably on Hume's personality and activities without consulting it. His many finds among unpublished manuscripts and old periodicals are the result of much searching in Scotland, England, France and America, a searching marked as much by flair as by diligence. As for the presentation, he has handled his mass of material with ease, interpreted it with sympathetic common sense, and expressed himself in a pleasant and unforced style. With this achievement of responsible scholarship he has put students of Hume's life and times heavily in debt to him.

The most remarkable feature of the work being its enrichment and correction of detail, a just review of it in short compass is impossible. The most that can be done is to give some samples of the detail. They may usefully be taken from each of the five sections into which Professor Mossner divides the *Life*.

(1) 1711-44. For the first time we are provided with a genealogical tree of the Humes (Homes) of Ninewells: we knew that David was descended from a Sir Alexander Home who died in 1424, but it is good to have the lineage worked out and graphically displayed. Of David's immediate family there is an evidenced account, down to such revealing details as the amount of his father's rentals. The biographically important letter of 1734 to a physician was intended, Mossner believes, not for George Cheyne but for John Arbuthnot (reversing the order of probability held by Hill Burton) and was probably not sent, the presumable reason being that Hume decided to deal with his troubles himself; and since the holograph we know was kept by him to the end of his life, Mossner infers that it was kept as "the symbol of self-mastery"—an acute suggestion, fitting Hume's character perfectly. Of the short stay in Bristol some new bits of information have been unearthed.

(2) 1744-9. The story of the tussle between Hume's supporters and opponents when he was a candidate for the Chair of Ethics at Edinburgh is filled out, and the fact of a defensive pamphlet by him, hitherto unknown and even now known only in its title, is disclosed. The military incursion into Brittany is recounted with circumstantial vividness, one of the new sources being a Hume manuscript in the Pierpont Morgan Library; the French view of the affair is more fully noticed, and Voltaire's scornful passage, which Hill Burton could not locate, is

authenticated. The almost empty page we have had on the visit to Turin is now enlivened with incident. Evidence is produced that Hume's project of a History of England, which his autobiography refers to 1752, goes back to 1745-6.

(3) 1749-63. This was the period, rich in literary production, in which Hume stepped into fame (in 1762, Mossner tells us, Boswell called him "the greatest writer in Britain"). We are now shown that the fame did not begin in France and then travel to Britain, but sprang up spontaneously in both countries—the kind of point that can come only from a close study of sources. Professor Mossner supports Hume's suspicion that the poor sale of the first volume of his *History* was due to resistance by the London booksellers, resentful that the work had been published in Edinburgh. The attempt to have Hume excommunicated by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland is described at length and with new documentation, and we learn for the first time (so far as I know) that in 1761 Rome placed all his writings on the *Index*.

(4) 1763-9. The Parisian adulation of Hume, apparently well covered by the earlier biographers, is retold with freshness, with new glimpses of the company and temper of the *salons*; there is a straightforward account of Hume's relations with the Comtesse de Boufflers; and some substance is at long last given to his work at the Embassy. A few things are added to the little we have known about his spell in London as Under-Secretary of State, his own summary of which was that he had "from a philosopher degenerated into a petty statesman."

(5) The final period is handled briefly and with restraint. I can only take from it one of the stories with which the book is sprinkled. Hume was in church with Lady Elizabeth Hamilton. The preacher announced his subject as scepticism. "That's at you, Mr. Hume," she whispered. Towards the end the preacher said he would now address himself to the chief of sinners. Hume seized the opportunity: "That's at your Ladyship."

Having set himself to write a Life, and having so much new matter to bring, the author has refrained from saying more than the minimum about Hume's philosophy (on which his general comment is very perceptive—that its originality lies neither in its empiricism nor in its ethical emphasis on "sentiment," but in its making "sentiment" the basis also of all inferential knowledge of matters of fact). He does give, however, some new information about what may be called its bio-bibliographical circumstance. For example, he has brought to light a significant piece of Hume's early reading, a copy (now in the U.S.A.) of Shaftesbury's *Characteristics* inscribed "Da: Hume. 1726," and is able to show that before writing the *Treatise* Hume was reading not only the congenial Bayle but also Fénelon, Cudworth, and Wm. King's *De Origine Mali* in Law's English translation, which contained the dissertation by John Gay that started Hartley on his associationism. Further, Professor Mossner has discovered three Continental reviews of 1739 of the first two volumes of the *Treatise*, three of 1740, an English critique of it also of 1740, and a Continental review of 1741 of the third volume (hitherto we have been aware of only a single review, English of 1739). He has also found that the *Treatise* was being advertised again from 1754 to 1756—an indication of (a) the long storage of unsold copies of the original edition, and (b) the publishers' attempt to take advantage of the reputation which Hume's recent works were acquiring. Another interesting discovery is of an early announcement of the *Abstract* under a title somewhat different from the copies (only three) known to be extant.

The aim of a biography being to reveal the man, Professor Mossner, having gathered so much new material in his hands, was in constant danger of missing that aim. In some of the chapters Hume is, indeed, lost in his *milieu*; but since this certainly needed to be re-explored, and since the author has explored it so

well, he was right in making his discoveries available. He has given us, and has clearly intended to give us, not so much a neat artistic character-study as an ordered body of information, new and old, the new documented and the old checked, which will have to be taken account of by anyone who henceforth attempts to compose a closely knit interpretative biography. Yet, with all his passion for research, Professor Mossner is too interested in Hume, and too schooled in literature, to avoid building up a picture of Hume, and the picture is all the more convincing because it emerges from the massed facts, not from an arbitrary or biased selection of them. At the end Hume stands before us as a man of wide interests, strong emotions, and very varied engagement in practical affairs—not as a pure thinker, as the bloodless author of certain philosophical propositions. He stands before us too as a very likeable man; also as a man who was dominantly moral in his concerns about public matters, and of real probity in his own conduct. Are we to continue to say that he had no room for religion? On this question I am not sure that Professor Mossner writes with his usual care; he supposes that the familiar evidence of Hume's public comments on religion is clinched by a reported remark of his that he "never had entertained any belief in religion since he began to read Locke and Clarke." This could be read as a typical bit of Humean dissimulation. The possibility might have been discussed (there being fugitive evidence for it), even if in the end dismissed, that his scepticism about God was like his scepticism about many other matters of existence, rejecting not believableness but provableness. In theory he was certainly an agnostic; it is not certain whether he was or was not at heart an atheist.

Among the illustrations the two Allan Ramsay portraits are in colour—the well-known one of 1766, showing Hume in his scarlet and gold Embassy dress, and the less familiar one of 1754, which makes a beautiful frontispiece. An old engraving of Hume with Rousseau is reproduced: it is Professor Mossner's discovery, and in his possession. There is an eighteenth-century print of Nine-wells, and Hume's bookplate. The remaining illustrations are mostly portraits of persons who are bound to be mentioned much in any biography of Hume. In this as in the other external aspects the publishers have generously supported their generous author, providing a book that, by current standards, is cheap at the price.

Of the major British philosophers we now have recent scholarly biographies of Berkeley and Hume. It is a reproach that we have nothing corresponding of Hobbes and Locke.

T. E. JESSOP.

*On Philosophical Style.* By BRAND BLANSHARD. (Manchester University Press, 1954. Pp. 69. Price 5s.)

It is probably true to say that in no technical subject do we find more variations in style than in philosophy: Plato has little in common with Aristotle, Descartes and Spinoza are poles apart, both these rationalists differ considerably from any of the English empiricists, and these empiricists in turn show no noticeable linguistic affinity with either Kant or Hegel. Variations, however, since style is the man, are to be expected; and we cannot quarrel with a philosopher unless his style is so disjointed or opaque or incomprehensible as to interpose a veil between us and his thought. It was on the ground of incomprehensibility, as Professor Blanshard points out on his opening page, that Macaulay quarrelled with Kant. "I received to-day," Macaulay wrote,

"a translation of Kant. . . . I tried to read it, but found it utterly unintelligible, just as if it had been written in Sanscrit . . . . I can understand Locke, and Berkeley, and Hume, and Reid, and Stewart. I can understand Cicero's Academics, and most of Plato; and it seems odd that in a book on the elements of metaphysics . . . I should not be able to comprehend a word."

Professor Blanshard claims, with justification, that there must be something radically wrong with any philosophy which an intelligent reader, of Macaulay's calibre, finds unintelligible—a philosophy, in fact, which fails to communicate. Few therefore would quarrel with his demand that philosophers should take some pains to achieve, if not elegance, at least lucidity and intelligibility. Yet when we approach the question of philosophical style more closely, certain difficulties appear, "In this matter of style, philosophy is in a difficult position. The trouble is that it belongs to the literature of knowledge, but that people demand of it all the virtues of the literature of power. Philosophizing proper is a purely intellectual enterprise. Its business is to analyse fundamental concepts, such as self, matter, mind, good, truth; to examine fundamental assumptions, such as that all events have causes; and to fit the conclusions together into a coherent view of nature and man's place in it. Now this is an austere intellectual business. To be sure, philosophy must take account of values, and in the appropriate fields it has much to say of beauty and deformity, of good and evil, and of the issues of religious belief. But it is pledged to discuss these issues with scientific detachment and dispassionateness. Yet in trying to do so the philosopher feels a tension that the scientist seldom has occasion to feel . . . . This tension grows from the double fact that feeling is the life of style, and yet that in philosophy it is generally an impertinence and a danger" (pp. 6-11).

Professor Blanshard has written a book that is timely as it is brief, lucid and nicely interspersed with apposite examples. He analyses with precision and perspicacity the stylistic faults to which philosophers have been, and in some cases still are, addicted; and shows how they may be avoided. At the same time he recognizes the peculiar difficulties with which any philosopher, who feels strongly about his ideas, is faced. After commenting on the successful techniques of some of the great English stylists—Macaulay, Froude, Carlyle, Hazlitt, Lamb, Ruskin—he goes on as follows: "But consider how impossible all this is in philosophic writing. Philosophy is not an attempt to excite or entertain; it is not an airing of one's prejudices—the philosopher is supposed to have no prejudices; it is not an attempt to tell a story, or paint a picture, or to get anyone to do anything, or to make anyone like this and dislike that. It is, as James said, 'a peculiarly stubborn effort to think clearly,' to find out by thinking what is true" (p. 13). From the very fact that a philosopher is engaged in a different sort of activity from that of novelists, poets or dramatic critics, there follows the reason why his style should be very different from their style. On this point, Blanshard makes an apt comment. "When we turn to look more closely at this craft of philosophic expression, we find to our relief that it is less exacting than the art of the true man of letters. What the philosopher must manage to embody in words is not the whole of him, nor the impulsive and imaginative part of him, but his intellectual part, his ideas and their connections. And his prime object must be to convey these to his readers at the cost of a minimum of effort on their part" (p. 27). Those who think these remarks banal or platitudinous have only to glance through any philosophical periodical to see how much they are needed. The next point discussed is why some philosophers—including not a few modern philosophers—fail to measure up to this apparently easy standard. Blanshard declares that there are many reasons for this failure, and cites in particular the tendency

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to excessive generality in statement (for which Hegel scores top marks), the distaste for giving concrete examples and the lack of attention paid to the rhythmical structure of sentences. To this he adds the following significant comment, which all of us might well ponder: "There have been many writers of philosophy in the past, there are many now, who, with great powers and much to say, say it so awkwardly, diffusely and crabbedly, as to turn would-be readers away by their first page. They deserve to be heard and there are many who would like to hear them, but they hobble themselves by supposing that writing philosophy is merely philosophizing aloud" (p. 40). Indeed, this "philosophizing aloud," often without regard to rules of syntax let alone to any stylistic considerations, is one of the defects of much modern philosophy. At the same time—and it is easy to get confused about this point—we must agree with Hazlitt's remark, which Blanshard quotes, that "no style is worth a farthing that is not calculated to be read out, or that is not allied to spirited conversation."

It merely remains to add that Professor Blanshard's book deserves the widest possible audience; for it not only sets forth and analyses what makes for good philosophical style but is itself an excellent example of what good style is.

J. HARTLAND-SWANN.

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*Descartes: Philosophical Writings.* A selection translated and edited by ELIZABETH ANSCOMBE and PETER THOMAS GEACH, with Introduction by ALEXANDRE KOYRÉ. (Nelson, 1954. Pp. 303. Price 12s. 6d.)

The importance of Descartes, as a philosopher for undergraduate study, cannot be overestimated. His lucid and elegant style (which puts him among the great French prose-writers), his cathartic technique and autobiographical approach to the construction of his philosophy, his simple methodology and clearly articulated metaphysical system—all these make him an ideal philosopher for the teacher to expound, the student to appreciate and both to criticize. Add to this the fact that Descartes' "myth" has come under heavy fire in Ryle's *Concept of Mind* and his importance becomes greater still. Yet for the English reader, texts have always been a problem. Ideally, as we know, the *Discourse* should be read in French and the *Meditations* and *Principles* in Latin; but since this generally imposes too heavy a demand on the resources of the average undergraduate, we must rely on translations for normal university purposes. Translations, however, have usually suffered from one of two defects: either they are poorly executed (as in the case of Veitch), or they are, for a student, on the expensive side (as in the case of Haldane and Ross); and those which escape these two defects may suffer from a third: injudicious selection. Any new translation, therefore, may represent a landmark in Cartesian textbooks and deserves the most careful scrutiny.

Let me say at once that the new volume of Descartes' philosophical writings, translated and edited by Miss Anscombe and Mr. Geach, is, both in style and accuracy, a very good translation indeed. There is much to be said for the policy which has guided our two editors. "In translating," they write, "our general principle has been to produce an English version intelligible as it stands, even if this involves some departure from the original, rather than a more literal version that is intelligible only when eked out by footnotes or appendices." This policy is faithfully carried out and the translators are to be congratulated on the high standard they have achieved—and sustained.

Having said this, I now propose to add some notes on the various sections into which the book is divided, a procedure which will enable me to point to certain features which call for criticism of one kind or another.

### *Introduction*

The editors have entrusted the introduction to M. Alexandre Koyré and in my opinion this has not proved an altogether fortunate choice. I have always had the greatest respect for M. Koyré's scholarship; he belongs to that eminent band of French thinkers who have devoted the most painstaking labour to the elucidation of Cartesian texts—setting them in the right historical perspective and demonstrating the relationship of apparently original Cartesian doctrines to their actual mediaeval ancestors. Nevertheless, like so many modern French philosophers, M. Koyré appears to be entirely ignorant of the philosophical developments of the last thirty years, and to such an extent that he has written an entirely uncritical introduction to Descartes' thought. No mention whatever is made of any of the very serious difficulties raised by the major steps in Descartes' arguments—difficulties which were fully appreciated long before linguistic analysis became fashionable—and the reader is led to infer that Descartes' main contentions (concerning innate ideas, the nature of the *Cogito*, the substantiality of the "self" and so forth), as well as his proofs for the existence of God and the external world, are so sound as to escape criticism. Not even Kant's attack on the Ontological argument receives a mention. Now this sort of facile praise does little service either to Descartes or to his readers. His position as a great philosopher is assured; and M. Koyré might have realized that no criticism can seriously undermine it, any more than criticism can seriously undermine Plato's position. Indeed, criticism is the lifeblood of understanding and the student must be given some indication at least as to what points of doctrine are vulnerable and why they are so. This could easily be done—as it often is done in introductions as long as M. Koyré's (37 pages)—by first giving an exposition of the philosopher's views and then a brief outline of the major points of possible criticism. The teacher can be expected to do the rest.

I think the editors were impressed by the fact that the most scholarly and detailed Cartesian criticism has, understandably enough, come from the pens of Frenchmen; and assumed on that account that a Frenchman should be asked to write an introduction for the benefit of English readers. There may be something to be said for this reasoning, even if it is by no means cogent—and I have no doubt that M. Gilson, for instance, could have written an excellent introduction. But whatever the merits of this argument, the fact remains that M. Koyré's approach leaves much to be desired; and I cannot but think that the two editors could have composed a far more useful introduction themselves.

### *Bibliography*

This is compiled, not by Miss Anscombe and Mr. Geach, but by the General Editor of the Nelson Philosophical Texts. It represents a satisfactory selection on the whole but it does miss out the one book of textual criticism which is vital to any serious Cartesian student capable of understanding French, namely, Etienne Gilson's Commentary on the *Discourse* (*Discours de la Méthode, Texte et Commentaire*). This work, with its detailed and illuminating notes and cross-references to parallel texts in the *Meditations*, *Principles* and *Regulae*, is the one which, above all others, the student should be encouraged to read. I hope this omission will be remedied in the second edition.

*The Philosophical Writings*

"Our principle of selection," the editors write, "has been: to include enough material to give an adequate general view of Descartes's system; to exclude details of obsolete scientific theories and theological technicalities." I think this policy has resulted in an admirable selection on the whole, and the reservations which I shall make in a moment will be of a minor order.

The editors start off, in an original manner, with the *Cogitationes privatae*. These "private thoughts," being early notebook jottings, were never published by Descartes himself and we owe their preservation to Leibniz. Nevertheless, they help us to understand some of Descartes' more mature writings, and they also attest to his religious sincerity which has been severely questioned by several critics including Charles Adam and Maxime Leroy (cf. the latter's *Descartes, le philosophe au masque*). Then follows the *Discourse*, translated, as is proper, from the French text of 1637, and making clear, right at the outset, that Descartes was a master of style. My only criticism here is that for some reason the editors have omitted Descartes' prefatory remarks which only occupy 16 lines in the original French text. Since these few lines sum up what the *Discourse* is about, they deserve to be included.

After the *Discourse* come the *Meditations*, translated, wisely enough, from the Latin text of 1642. But here too there is an initial omission: the Dedication, the Preface to the Reader and the Synopsis—all of which reveal interesting facets of Descartes' philosophic orientation. On the other hand, I would not care to press this point too strongly since the editors were no doubt restricted as to space. Still, it might have been better to cut down on some of the Letters, published at the end, rather than omit the Dedication and the Synopsis. Incidentally, the editors are to be congratulated on their short, occasional and wholly judicious footnotes—particularly where these explain some of the mediaeval jargon which, for want of anything better, Descartes took over and used.

The editors publish next the Third Set of Objections and Replies; and since Hobbes was the objector, these are of especial interest to the English student. It is to be regretted that no space could be found for the Appendix to the Second Replies where, *inter alia*, the Ontological argument, which sprawls its way through *Med. V*, is presented in syllogistic form. Students can benefit from comparing the two versions.

In the next section follow the *Regulae*, judiciously cut. Though never published by Descartes himself (they were an early work), they give us many clues for interpreting his later writings as well as amplifying the methodology of the *Discourse*. They are therefore very valuable for the student. My only criticism here is that Rule VI, except for the short introductory paragraph, is omitted entirely, although Rule XII is given *in extenso*. Now it is precisely in Rules VI and XII that Descartes introduces his doctrine of "simple natures,"<sup>1</sup> never again referred to by that name in any of his published works. I have myself argued elsewhere that we do well to give this inconsistent doctrine a wide berth; but since many Cartesian critics, English as well as French, regard the doctrine as central to Descartes' thought, and since the second part of it (which appears in Rule XII) is reproduced, the first part (which appears in Rule VI) should be reproduced as well.

After the *Regulae* come extracts from the *Principles*. Ideally, it is desirable for the student to read the whole of Part I of the *Principles*, since this represents an austere and incisive version of the *Meditations* and deals, in addition, with several important points not so far discussed. However, since limits must be

<sup>1</sup> In an article entitled "Descartes' 'Simple Natures'" (*Philosophy*, Vol. XXII, No. 82 July, 1947).

set to the length of a popular textbook, I am not disposed to quarrel with the editors' policy to reproduce only those passages which "supply further exposition and development of the ideas of the *Meditations*"—even though 48 Principles are thereby omitted. So far as the extracts from Parts II, III and IV are concerned, all these are admirable; they give the student an insight into Descartes' scientific views and illustrate his overriding preoccupation with physics, for which metaphysics is merely a preparation and a necessary foundation.

The editors next give us some skilfully selected passages from the *Dioptrics*. These passages are extremely valuable since they present Descartes' theory of vision, a theory which was later to be attacked by Berkeley in his *New Theory of Vision*. The remainder of the book is occupied by a selection from Descartes' letters (37 pages) and two Appendices (5 pages). The letters, which were selected by the General Editor, indicate Descartes' views on various philosophical matters and, though useful in their way, might well be condensed or even (with the exception of the correspondence with Princess Elizabeth on the relation of the soul and body) eliminated. This last suggestion may sound somewhat drastic to the editors, but the space saved could profitably be devoted to a selection from the First Part of the *Passions of the Soul* where Descartes' interaction theory, together with his general psychology, are clearly and incisively set forth. Appendix I gives, in 3 pages, some useful elucidation of the *Cogito* and includes a short extract from Descartes' very important letter to the Marquis of Newcastle. It is a pity that the blank space on p. 301 is not partially reduced by the inclusion of that vital earlier paragraph in the Newcastle letter which begins "La connaissance intuitive est une illustration de l'esprit." There is a similar and more important omission in Appendix II (On Innate Ideas), which reproduces part of Descartes' reply to Regius' "Programme." One further paragraph, which could conveniently fill the blank space on p. 303, would indicate the extreme form of innatism to which Descartes committed himself in his later years.

Lastly I have two minor complaints, of a general nature, to register. First, I would prefer to see the possessive case of the philosopher's name written as "Descartes'" rather than "Descartes's" (which is not euphonious); second, it would have been useful for the student if the editors had been able to provide an Index, or better some Indices. I should like to emphasize, however, that these complaints, together with the criticisms I have felt impelled to make, must not be allowed to cast doubts on the general excellence of the work taken as a whole. It can be safely recommended to all students who, for whatever reason, are unable to tackle the original texts in the Adam-Tannery edition. And the price of 12s. 6d. must rank as reasonable in this post-war book world.

J. HARTLAND-SWANN.

*The Question of Jean-Jacques Rousseau.* By ERNST CASSIRER. Translated and edited with an introduction and additional notes by PETER GAY. (Columbia University Press, 1954. Pp. 129. Price \$2.75.)

Cassirer's essay on Rousseau first appeared in German in 1932 and in Italian in 1938, but this is the first time that it has been published in English. It is a frequently debatable but invariably stimulating example of interpretative criticism. The introduction and translation by Mr. Gay both serve their purpose very well; and the book is pleasantly produced.

In Cassirer's view, Rousseau was a man with a fundamentally coherent and

powerful world-view, whose relatively unimportant failures to express himself clearly are alone responsible for his reputation as a writer of wild, if inspiring, contradictions. This world-view was, moreover, "the most categorical form of a pure ethics of obligation that was established before Kant" (p. 96). Law, freedom and will, even a rational will, are among its key concepts. To say that man is naturally good or that he is born free is to say nothing about his earliest historical origins; it is a denial of any version of the doctrine of original sin together with an affirmation of man's essential perfectability. (In this Rousseau is perhaps rather more optimistic than Kant.) The responsibility for the development of his potentialities lies not on God but on himself and not on the isolated individual but on political society. Present society, indeed, is in no condition to initiate its own reform, but there can be no retreat to the liberty of the state of nature; the only hope lies in advance to civil liberty. For this a reformer is needed, a new man educated in such a way as to avoid all contact with a society that could only corrupt him, until he is ready to remake it. For what is wanted is a society where the actions of all are willed in accordance with the universal law—or rather where it is the universal law itself that is willed. Only in the society of pure law can the individual find his highest freedom and morality; the society of the general will or the society that is a kingdom of ends.

There is no doubt that impressive support for this interpretation can be gathered from Rousseau's writings. It is, furthermore, illuminating not only for the light that it sheds on Rousseau, but also for that which it sheds on Kant and perhaps too on his idealist successors. But it is risky to claim that it is not just one but the only authentic interpretation. As Mr. Gay says, "The assiduous search for an intellectual core may sweep away, as insignificant, contradictions which are actually fundamental" (p. 24). Cassirer produces his appearance of inner unity with the aid of a variety of interpretive techniques. He makes, of course, selections; it is the business of any interpreter. Where key terms are ambiguous he is bound to resolve the ambiguities in the direction of his central thesis. Where there remain inescapable contradictions, they are presented as qualifications to the main doctrine, due to some failure of theoretical capability or interest rather than to any unclarity of the real, but ill-formulated, message. Rousseau's own surprising accounts of the origins and unity of his thought are readily accepted as having "an inner truthfulness." And so on. But, of course, there are other possible selections and other places in which the emphases may very plausibly be put.

Nevertheless, the general problems of interpretation that are raised by this essay are very real. It is all very well to smile more or less indulgently at the critics who oppose the "real meaning" of their author to what he often actually said. True, this method may lead to a wide variety of results, all seemingly beyond any possible check. But any form of interpretation involves some modification of language. There must be few who have not at some time been grateful to accept another's version of what they have said as a better rendering of their real intentions; or who have had never to recognize a contradiction in a thesis they have put forward or to sacrifice something as inconsistent with what it is their main purpose to uphold. Problems of meaning can crop up at many levels and not just at those of individual words or sentences. Cassirer's essay will be stimulating not only to those whose primary interest is in Rousseau, but indirectly too to anyone interested in the wider problems of meaning and interpretation and of how and why one version may be recommended as worthier of acceptance than another. Now that it is translated into English it should become as widely known here as it deserves.

ALAN MONTEFIORE

## NEW BOOKS

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Ethics. By P. H. NOWELL-SMITH. (Penguin Books, Ltd., 1954. Pp. 320. Price 3s. 6d.)

(1) Nobody should be misled by the price of this book: it is as long, and qualitatively as substantial, as many more portentous-looking volumes. Nor should it be thought, because the author has made public a lot of good sense which has been current in philosophical circles for some time, that his own original contributions are inconsiderable; we have here a work which, had it been put up in stiff covers and large type, and sold for five times the price, would still have been bought (or at least read) by all serious students of the subject.

Mr. Nowell-Smith is a fox, not a hedgehog; he covers a wide range, and says a great many sensible things rather than a few momentous ones. Indeed, he might be criticized for letting his main contentions get lost in a maze of qualifications. Yet he has a very definite philosophical platform, consisting of two main planks. The first is to defend the traditional conception of moral philosophy as a "practical science" against the proponents of what he calls "theoretical ethics"; the second is to show that our moral principles are not inexplicable data of intuition, but are what they are because of the facts of human nature, its desires and fears. In so far as particular philosophers are mentioned, they are predominantly either black, as Kant, Moore, Prichard, Ross, and Broad, or white, as Aristotle, Hume and Mill. The weapons by which virtue is made to triumph are those of linguistic philosophy at its most sophisticated. The moral words, together with a large gallery of words from the language of moral psychology, are reduced to as much order as is currently allowed to be permissible by means of an elaborate apparatus of logical terms, many of them new.

(2) Let us first consider these weapons. In place of the ordinary terms of logic, "entails," "self-contradictory," "analytic," etc., we are given the two interrelated terms "contextually implies" and "logically odd." We are to say that "a statement  $p$  contextually implies a statement  $q$  if anyone who knew the normal conventions of the language would be entitled to infer  $q$  from  $p$  in the context in which they occur." This term is illustrated in the following example (p. 81):

If Jones says "It is raining," Smith is entitled to infer that Jones believes that it is raining, although "Jones believes that it is raining" clearly does not follow logically from "It is raining."

There is an unfortunate ambiguity here. From what does Smith infer that Jones believes that it is raining? From the fact that Jones says "It is raining"? Or from the fact that it is raining? The latter would have to be meant, if the contrast which the author wishes to draw were to be in point. But yet this cannot be the meaning; for by no sort of reasoning can we infer, from the fact that it is raining, that Jones believes that it is. But, on the other hand, from the fact that Jones says "It is raining" Smith cannot, however much he knows about the normal conventions of language, infer that Jones believes that it is raining, unless he accepts the further premiss that Jones is speaking sincerely, i.e. that what he says, he believes to be true. And from this premiss, in conjunction with the premiss 'Jones says "It is raining,"' it follows logically that Jones believes that it is raining; so we seem to have an inference which, with this extra premiss, is a case of logical entailment, but without it just cannot be made at all. We know that a man is not lying, not from "the normal conventions of the language," but from our estimation of his charac-

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ter; though, admittedly, if lying exceeded a certain degree of prevalence, language would lose its utility.

"Logically odd" is illustrated as follows:

There is clearly no contradiction between "It is raining" and "Jones believes that it isn't raining"; yet it would be logically odd for Jones to say "It is raining, but I don't believe it is."

It must be pointed out that the oddness of the latter statement is as independent of the context in which it is made as is the self-contradictoriness of a self-contradictory statement. Our grounds, therefore, for pronouncing a statement to be logically odd, in the sense in which this statement is logically odd, cannot have anything to do with context (as the author apparently thinks) except in the sense in which even self-contradictoriness cannot be alleged until we know the context, and thus the intention of the speaker.

(3) Nevertheless, though Mr. Nowell-Smith introduces these and other terms in a way which does not make them entirely clear, he uses them to good purpose, and it is to be hoped that those who borrow the terms will be as careful as he is not to put on them more weight than they will bear. They are used in order to set out a classification of words (or, more properly, uses of words) which is to take the place of the common evaluative-descriptive distinction. Instead of this two-fold division, we have three classes: D-words (corresponding roughly to descriptive words in the old terminology), A-words (an intermediate class) and G-words (corresponding roughly to evaluative words). Examples of A-words are "terrifying" and "funny." The logic of these words is understood when we understand what their use in a particular instance contextually implies, which may be one, any or all of a number of different kinds of thing, according to the context. In the case of "terrifying" these are: (a) that I, the speaker, am, was or would be terrified (subjective element), (b) that someone concerned, e.g. the hearer, would, if suitable circumstances arose, be terrified (predictive element), (c) that people like the hearer are usually terrified by this sort of thing (generalizing element), and (d) that the thing in question has certain properties which cause the reaction, terror (causal element). The fact that these various elements in the implications of these words play Box and Cox is convincingly shown to be responsible for a lot of the perplexities which logicians have experienced in dealing with this type of word.

But the loosening-up process goes even further. For not only do G-words share many of the characteristics of A-words (in addition to other characteristics peculiar to themselves); and not only is the same word used sometimes as an A-word and sometimes as a G-word (and sometimes as a D-word); but even the same word on the same occasion of its use may play more than one of these roles. A word which does this is aptly called a "Janus-word." It is obvious that by this time Mr. Nowell-Smith is in a position to bypass many vexed ethical controversies. For example, it becomes clear that the objectivist-subjectivist dispute has lasted so long only because the moral words do indeed have, on different occasions and even on the same occasion, the characteristics to which the two contestants draw attention; it is possible for each side, by choosing its examples discerningly, to establish an apparently irrefutable case. The truth is only to be had, both in this dispute, and in that concerning weakness of will, and in many others, by looking Janus square in both (or all) his faces; this feat Mr. Nowell-Smith performs with admirable agility.

(4) It is not clear to me just what he is attacking and what he is defending when he claims to be a champion of the traditional moral philosophy. The

book is called on the cover "A study of the words and concepts that we use for answering practical questions, making decisions, advising, warning and appraising conduct"; and both the book itself, and Professor Ayer's statement of its purpose in his editorial preface, bear out this description. The author is therefore clearly himself doing "theoretical ethics" in one sense; in the terms of Moore's dictum, which he quotes with disapproval, the *direct* object of his book is knowledge and not practice. If the current distinction between ethics and morals be accepted, the book is ethics; the moral words occur in it in mention, not in use, and the things that are said about them (the ethical statements) constitute an ethical *theory*. The traditional moralists, on the other hand, though they also did some ethics in this sense, were predominantly concerned to *use* moral terms in order to make moral judgments; and the ethics were usually introduced only in a (mistaken) attempt to *prove* the truth of the moral judgments. In what he *does*, therefore, Mr. Nowell-Smith is on the side of Moore as against, for example, Plato; he does not even allow himself to do what Moore called "practical ethics" and pursued in the later chapters of *Principia Ethica*. He is the defender of the right of the old moralists to do what they did; but he is their champion, not their imitator.

But it is evident that the kind of "theoretical ethics" which he wishes to attack is rather that which holds that moral judgments themselves are theoretical, i.e. that which "represents moral knowledge as knowledge that a certain object has a certain characteristic" (p. 39). He opposes to this view the view, with which I agree, that "the central activities for which moral language is used are choosing and advising others to choose" (p. 1). And he criticizes most convincingly the errors associated with the former way of putting the matter. But is he right, historically, to represent himself as the defender of tradition? It is more correct, surely, to say that the realization that moral language has an entirely different function from descriptive language is a discovery of our own day, a discovery made by the successors of Moore, and arising directly out of his work. And although many of the older writers (Aristotle, for example, and Hume, and above all Kant, to whom Mr. Nowell-Smith gives insufficient credit) drew a distinction between moral and factual language, they were radically confused about the true nature of the distinction, and, if asked "Is moral knowledge knowledge that a certain object has a certain characteristic?" would in all probability have answered "Yes."

(5) A good deal is done in the book to illuminate the controversy between the deontologists and the teleologists. The author's heart is with the latter, though he concedes that the expression of their views was often confused. Moral principles are not translatable into statements about our purposes or desires, but we would not have the principles that we do have (or indeed any at all) unless we had purposes and desires. We can always ask for a justification of a moral principle in terms of its purpose. At least one reader, while very sympathetic to this approach, was left with a desire for more to be said on the question "What *kind* of justification?" Like Hume, Mr. Nowell-Smith founds morality on human nature; he does not, however, say enough about those crucial moral questions which are posed for us by our power to alter the natures of ourselves and others.

The following questions, among others, are treated lucidly and effectively: the difference between morals and the sciences; the vocabulary of "motives"; egoism and hedonism; the alleged exclusive moral worth of "conscientious action"; punishment; and free will. A number of statements in the book seemed to me inaccurately expressed or even wrong (for example, it is implied on p. 149 that if a statement *p* entails statements *q* and *r* it can only properly

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be used in cases where there is a necessary connection between  $q$  and  $r$ ). But these minor errors, if they are errors, do little to diminish the usefulness of what must be judged to be a very thoughtful and stimulating book.

R. M. HARE.

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*Leibniz*. By RUTH LYDIA SAW. (Penguin Books, 1954. Pp. 240. Price 2s. 6d.)

Dr. Saw's book is well adapted to the series in which it appears, since it is for the most part intelligible to someone with no previous philosophy. She covers all the main topics—monads, God, space and time, and so on—adequately, deliberately choosing to give her exposition more or less in Leibniz's own language. She does not follow Russell and others who have translated his metaphysics into logic and epistemology, and in her comments she draws on critical philosophy since Leibniz hardly at all. There can be no doubt that this is the best way to introduce Leibniz (for the more sophisticated analyses can only be carried out by a student who is philosophically well equipped) but it leaves Dr. Saw with the problem of how to give Leibniz's very odd metaphysical language enough initial plausibility to command the reader's serious attention. Her way of doing this is to treat metaphysics as the final stage in the ordinary process of resolving the inconsistencies and paradoxes of ordinary experience. "We say things like: That was not a ghost you saw but . . . that was not a solid arch of many different colours you saw standing in the sky but . . ." And similarly we reach Leibniz's metaphysical doctrine of space by saying "something like: That is not spatial intervals between bodies which you are seeing but . . ." Metaphysical talk about monads is "speaking in a way which will further no practical end but will provide a description which will be satisfying to those people who cannot be content until they reach a description in which the elements are connected together in a reasonable manner, that is, to the metaphysically minded."

This approach enables Dr. Saw to show very lucidly how some of Leibniz's metaphysical doctrines grew out of non-metaphysical problems. She points out both his inconsistencies and his successes, and her readers will be able to read Leibniz with very much more understanding for having this shown to them in an orderly way. Sooner or later some of them will have to ask themselves whether "more intellectually satisfying" (Dr. Saw's criterion) is a sufficient account of the difference between sets of concepts that we use, a trifle lazily, to describe experience in daily life and even in science, and metaphysical "descriptions" arrived at by harder thinking. Some "metaphysically-minded" people believe that there is a much more radical difference between them than this, though they do not find it easy to say what it is. Anyone who has not first taken Leibniz in Dr. Saw's way is unlikely to grasp the problem at all.

Both for what it does successfully and for what it does not attempt to do, Dr. Saw's *Leibniz* is a commendable addition to the Penguin philosophy books.

PETER LUCAS.

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*Solvable Cases of the Decision Problem*. By W. ACKERMANN. (North-Holland Publishing Company, 1954. Pp. viii + 114. No price stated.)

This is a new volume in the useful series of Studies in Logic published at Amsterdam. As the title suggests, it does not deal with Church's theorem nor yet with the various results given by Tarski in his book on *Undecidable Theories* in the same series, but it presents in an orderly fashion the solutions which have

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been found for the decision problem in special cases of the functional calculus of the first order with equality, and shows how some cases can be connected with others by appropriate reduction theorems. The first two chapters contain a clear explanation of the technical terminology required for the argument, but the treatment throughout is mathematical rather than philosophical and does not make easy reading. Unfortunately the publishers have not carried out very satisfactorily the author's request for a revision of his English, and there are some passages where the reader will be lost unless he can guess the underlying German. On pages 26 and 38, for example, "respectively" is used as though it were an equivalent for the German "respektive."

WILLIAM KNEALE.

*John Locke*. By R. I. AARON. (Clarendon Press, second edition, 1955. Pp. x + 323. Price 25s.)

This is a second edition of the book first published in 1937 and reviewed then in this journal by Dr. Ewing. The book has been reset, an account of Draft C of the *Essay* has been added and the bibliography has been enlarged to include reference to books and articles published since the book first appeared. Otherwise the changes are very small, mainly consisting of footnotes referring to later work and minor corrections and additions.

It is very useful to have again available this account of the life and philosophical thought of Locke by a scholar whose knowledge of his subject is second to none. There is surely no better general discussion of Locke than that contained in this book. But it seems that a number of over-simplifications of Locke's thought remain in this edition which, though no doubt pressed for space, the author is hardly justified in leaving. For example, in the discussion of Locke's doctrine of abstract ideas Aaron speaks (p. 203) of us gaining complex ideas from which we select certain ideas to frame an essence, which is an abstract idea. But according to Locke all complex ideas are made voluntarily by the mind—our complete idea of a horse is itself an abstract idea, not something gained in experience from which abstract ideas are formed. Further, in the same discussion Aaron limits his discussion to ideas of substances and mathematical ideas; both spheres in which Locke thought that our abstract ideas were arbitrary to some degree and had but a nominal essence. No indication is given that simple ideas also are for Locke abstract in general thinking and signify a real essence (*Essay* III iv 2: 'The names of simple ideas and substances, with the abstract ideas in the mind which they immediately signify, . . .'; and *Essay* III iv 3: 'The names of simple ideas and modes signify always the real as well as the nominal essence of their species'); for Locke every general word, including such as 'red' and 'sweet,' stands for an abstract idea. It would be an impertinence to suggest that Aaron is unaware of these points; but it needs to be pointed out that readers who are unaware of them could be seriously misled by the book to think of abstract ideas as a separate kind of ideas alongside of the simple and complex ideas. But to anyone who is prepared to read Locke as well as reading Aaron this book will be of the greatest assistance.

J. O. URMSON.

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## LECTURES

Special attention is drawn to the Lecture by the President of the Institute, the Rt. Hon. Viscount SAMUEL, G.C.B., G.B.E., D.Litt., D.C.L., LL.D., which will be given on Tuesday, February 7th, at 6 p.m., at the Assembly Hall, London Institute of Education, Malet Street, W.C.1. All other Lectures will be given at the Institute at 5.30 p.m.

A Course of Three Lectures on "The French Revolution and the Philosophers," by Professor H. B. Acton (Bedford College, London).

Friday, January 20th.	I. "Rousseau and the French Revolution."
Friday, January 27th.	II. "Condorcet and the French Revolution."
Friday, February 3rd.	III. "Hegel and the French Revolution."
Tuesday, February 7th.	At the Assembly Hall, Institute of Education, Malet Street, W.C.1, at 6 p.m. "Philosophy and the Life of the Nation." The Rt. Hon. Viscount Samuel, G.C.B., G.B.E., D.Litt., D.C.L., LL.D.
Friday, February 17th.	"Religion and the Unconscious." Professor H. D. Lewis (King's College, London).
Friday, February 24th.	"Perception." Professor A. J. Ayer (University College, London).
Friday, March 2nd.	"Belief and Action." Professor L. J. Russell (University of Birmingham).
Friday, March 9th.	"The Philosophical Relevance of Religious Experience." The Rev. F. C. Copleston, S.J., M.A. (Heythrop College, Chipping Norton).

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